DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 136 227 CS 003 285

AUTHOR Elliott, Claire, Ed.; Anderson, Jonathon, Ed.
TITLE Literacy--A Focus on the Future; Proceedings of the Australian Reading Conference (1st, Adelaide, August 1975)
INSTITUTION South Australian Reading Association, Adelaide.
PUB DATE 75
NOTE 225p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$11.37 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adults; Australian Aboriginal Languages; Childrens Literature; *Conference Reports; Educational Resources; Elementary Secondary Education; English (Second Language); *Reading; Reading Diagnosis; *Reading Instruction; *Reading Materials; *Reading Processes; Spelling; Student Motivation; *Teacher Education
IDENTIFIERS Bullock Report

ABSTRACT

The papers published in this volume were delivered at the First Australian Reading Conference, which was held in Adelaide in August 1975. Topics of discussion included, among others, preservice and inservice teacher education, facilities in reading, the development and use of reading materials, student motivation, children's literature, reading processes, adult illiteracy and testing for literacy, and reading English as a second language. In addition, Donald Moyle's opening paper, "The Bullock Report and Its Implications," provided a summary of emerging needs for the teaching of language and reading in the United Kingdom; Charles C. Cripps contributed "The Question of Spelling"; Beth Stevenson presented "Three Rs for Technical Teachers: Realistic Reading Resources"; Angela Ridsdale contributed "The Pit and the Ambulance--Diagnosis and Preventive Teaching in Relation to Language Skills"; and Eirlys Richards submitted "Literacy of Adult Aborigines." (KS)

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Literacy — A Focus on the Future

Edited by

Claire Elliott

and

Jonathon Anderson

Proceedings of the First Australian Reading Conference

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Adelaide, 1975

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SOUTH AUSTRALIAN READING ASSOCIATION
C/- Reading Development Centre,
91 Gilles Street,
Adelaide, S.A. 5000

Printed by F. Bowden & Sons Pty. Ltd., Adelaide.

FOREWORD

The papers published here were delivered at the First Australian Reading Conference held in Adelaide in August, 1975.

Five hundred and fifty people participated in workshops, seminars and lecture sessions which explored many aspects of reading and related literacy skills. The conference became a forum for exchanging information and resources and for discussion of problems relating to reading and language.

Attention was given to issues such as pre-service and inservice courses, facilities in reading and to the development and use of reading materials. With the formation, at the conference, of the Australian Reading Association, there is an impetus for the continuing exchange of ideas and resources.

Donald Moyle's opening paper on the *Bullock Report* provided the conference with a summary of emerging areas of need for the teaching of language and reading in the United Kingdom. As one who prepared submissions for the report, Mr. Moyle was able to discuss important implications of the report for Australia.

Constance McCullough emphasized the need for teachers to make the acquisition of reading and language skills meaningful for children, and for assisting children to see the purposes of reading. This emerged as an important area of concern at the conference.

In the final plenary session, David Doake presented a paper on the problems of and possibilities for the pre-service and inservice education of teachers.

One of the more popular speakers was Charles Cripps, who conducted a very informative and practical session on the question of spelling.

Those papers are reprinted here along with papers dealing with, among other things, children's literature, adult illiteracy, testing for literacy and reading English as a second language.

It was a vigorous, concerned and wide ranging conference and we feel that the papers reprinted here reflect the spirit of that week in Adelaide.

Claire Elliott.
Jonathon Anderson.

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SINCE THE DAYS OF BULLOCK DRAYS — A HISTORY OF READING IN SOUTH AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION 1

Jim Giles

Two bullock drays rumble down the track from the slab timber Government House. A woman walks down to the river Torrens to fetch water in a pail, disturbing a pair of teal ducks which fly up amongst the river gums, wheel back over Holy Trinity Church and its neighbouring timber buildings and disappear over the Bank of South Australia. Smoke curls up from camp fires, and a family group of aborigines chats quietly around their wiltja. Mr. Shepherdson, lately arrived in the colony, checks his watch and steps into his school.

Mr. Shepherdson, having been engaged by the South Australian School Society to fill the office of Head Teacher and Director of the schools, has set up in a building opposite Trinity Church on North Terrace a one-roomed school of 57 children. He was able to report on 21st July, 1838, just two months after the school opened, that:

"Ten children spell and read words of two letters.
"Nine children spell and read words of three letters.
"Nine children spell and read words of four letters.
"Six children spell and read words of five letters.
"Ten children spell and read words of two syllables.
"Seven children spell and read words of three syllables.
"Eleven children spell and read words of three syllables.
"Eleven children spell and read almost every word.
"Seventeen write on paper.
"Forty-five write on slates.
"Eighteen are reading the Gospels.
"Eleven are learning the geography of the Holy Land and its history, and the same class learns English Grammar and outlines of English History.
"A lesson on objects is given three times a week."

The water in the bay at Edithburgh is dead flat calm. A few gulls squawk in a desultory fashion about the rigging of a wheat ketch which has docked the previous evening from Port Adelaide. In the

Family Hotel, Inspector Dr. Emil Jung finishes his breakfast with unhurried dignity. He calls for the landlord and asks that a pony and trap be ready to take him to Yorketown after lunch on the following day. Then, with the calm of a man about to do his duty, and conscious of his status, he moves from the Family Hotel and strolls comfortably to the school. Children in pinafores run. The word spreads and soon the population of the school is gathered in tense excited groups watching Inspector Dr. Emil Jung approach.

It is June 1891 and the time for the Annual Examination of the schools is at hand. In the school, aware of the tension in the playground, and with an increasing feeling of despair, Mr. Frederick Thompson, schoolmaster, checks the slate pencils, scans his roll book once more, and calls to his observer.

"Where is he now?"

"Please sir, he's down by Bullock's corner", replies the urchin.

Eventually, Mr. Thompson will emerge from the door, greet Inspector Dr. Emil Jung at the school gate and conduct him inside. The great man will condescend to conversation later in the day — for the time being he doesn't want familiarity or joviality to prejudice his judgement.

At the back of his mind, like a roll of drums and guide to duty, are the regulations on the Examination of Schools, first printed in the July 1870 *Gazette:*

B. Examination of Schools

160. There shall be an annual examination of all schools which shall have been established for not less than nine months.

161. No teacher shall be held responsible for the result of an examination unless he or she has been in charge of the school for at least six months.

162. Teachers will be allowed to withdraw children whose names have not been on the books for at least three months, or, in the case of the junior division, for at least six months before the day of examination.

163. The inspectors are empowered to exempt other children if it shall appear that there are satisfactory reasons for withdrawing them.

164. Marks will be awarded to each child examined according to the following plan:

Subject	Maximum marks obtainable by each child examined					
	J.D.	I.	II.	III.	IV.	V.
Reading	2	2	2	2	2	2
Spelling	—	2	2	2	2	2

Writing	1	2	2	2	2	1
Arithmetic	2	4	4	4	6	6
Language	—	—	2	2	2	2
Drawing	1	2	2	2	2	3
Needlework	—	1	1	2	2	2

Five per cent. of the total marks obtainable on individual examination may be allowed for each of the following: (1) Geography, (2) History (and Language in the Junior and First Classes), (3) Poetry, (4) Special and Moral Lessons, (5) Singing, (6) Discipline and order, (7) Drill.

165. The exact marks awarded to each school for each of these branches will be fixed at the discretion of the inspector.

166. In reading one mark will be given for the bare pass, and the other for good expression and an intelligent knowledge of the subject matter.

167. One mark will be given for spelling tested by dictation, and the second mark for a properly kept book, in which throughout the school year the spelling has been taught by dictation and transcription.

168. In writing, one mark will be allotted to transcription, and one to a finished copybook.

169. In drawing, one mark will be given for a finished book, and one for an exercise done on the day of examination.

170. In arithmetic, the marks will be divided between the mental and written work.

171. Discipline and order will include the proper preparation and observance of the timetable and programmes of lessons, and the proper keeping of the various school records.

172. In infant schools marks will be awarded on examination as for a Junior Division. Marks equal in number to those obtained by individual examination will be assigned to the exercise specified in Regulation 155.

173. At the close of the examination the inspector will mark the names of such children as in his opinion should be promoted, and the teacher will be required to present these children in a higher class at the next examination. As a general rule, no child under the age of seven years will be promoted by the inspector from the junior division. Any child may be promoted at the discretion of the teacher.

174. A full report of the annual examination will be forwarded to each teacher, and it is to be fastened in the inspector's register immediately it is received.

175. Any teacher who may have reason to complain of the manner in which an examination has been conducted must report the circumstances within forty-eight hours after the conclusion thereof.

176. Should any special circumstances have injuriously affected the school, and therefore caused the percentage to be lower than it otherwise would have been, such circumstances may be reported in writing by the head teacher within seven days of the examination.

177. At the close of each year the schools shall be arranged in classes.

178. The basis of classification shall be the proficiency of the scholars as shown by the annual examination, but the inspectors shall consider each case on its merits. The following table shows the percentage required as a rule for each class, but the classification may be altered if it shall appear that any subject has been neglected, or that the percentage does not fairly represent the condition of the school.

Class	Percentage obtained by the School	Class	Percentage obtained by the School
A.	85 and above	D.	70 and below 75
B.	80 and below 85	E.	60 and below 70
C.	75 and below 80	F.	Below 60

179. The proposed classification of each school shall be notified to the head teacher thereof, and seven days shall be allowed for an appeal to the Minister, whose decision shall be final.

One after another, children will approach the throne to read to the Inspector. Frightened but grittily persevering they stumble through, with varying degrees of success, the passages nominated by Dr. Jung. He hears in judicial silence, perhaps helps with a word. At the end of the passage he asks a question or two. Periodically, he will ask a child to read from the *Children's Hour*, a new-fangled publication put out by the Central Board of Education. Schoolmaster Frederick Thompson, hovering in the background, agonizes with each child as it battles its way through a passage from Nelson's *Fourth Royal Reader*. The voices are stilted, the punctuation laboured, the tone is that of an elocution class. Morning recess comes and goes. The day creeps on as inexorably the Inspector examines the school.

Next afternoon, Frederick Thompson, having had his school classified as D and smarting from the injustice of it, canes two lads who, reacting from the tension of the occasion are fooling about in the back row. Janet Murphy, whose father is a fisherman, weeps endlessly. She has been failed in Class III and will get it when she arrives home. The week ends unhappily and restlessly.

On 5th February, 1891, in the Nairne Primary School, Mr. John Erickson, prepares to give out their readers to his pupils. To the little people in the Junior Division he hands Adelaide Reading Sheets and

the First Primer, and to those in the upper part the Second Primer. Class I gets the Adelaide Introductory Reader of Nelson's *First Royal Reader*, and thereafter the classes get other numbers of Mr. Nelson's Royal Readers. The tables of contents are impressive. In the fifth Royal Reader for instance:

The Great Siege of Gibraltar
Battle of Coruna and the Death of More
The Trial by Combat, Parts I and II
Damascus and London
Battle of Trafalgar and the Death of Nelson
Man and the Industrial Arts
The Relief of Leyden
The Burning of Moscow
Cairo and the Pyramids
Rhetorical Passages
Life in Saxon England

Running his eyes down the contents, John Erickson sighs. His pupils are the children of storekeepers and dairy farmers on small holdings. They are 12,000 miles from Europe. They are more familiar with kangaroos and wombats than life in Saxon England. Nevertheless, the books are useful for the busy teacher. Take Book V, for instance. At the conclusion of each passage is a list of difficult words with meanings, then notes of historical interest, and then questions on the passage. Furthermore, the difficult words for which there are meanings are marked in the text by dots. Useful stuff. The passages are often very much above the children though. And the print is small.

The Children's Hour is also available on payment of a subscription of 2/- for six copies. This is an innovation begun in January 1890, and it is hoped to fill a need for suitable reading material for children. It will last for 74 years and the last number will come out in December 1963. John Erickson is uncertain about the production. Some of it is good stuff — in the last April edition there was a story about a child being lost and found in mallee country. There was mention of heat and dust and blackfellows and a black snake. The children enjoyed it. Each edition has pictures of Adelaide features and scenes. Most of the longer stories have a South Australian bias. The tone, however, is sentimental and moral, but this is consistent with the tenor of the times.

A Little Boy's Heroism

A gentleman in Dublin proposed to drive with his wife to the beautiful Glasnevin Cemetery. Calling his son, a bright boy four years old, he told him to get ready to accompany them. The

child's countenance fell, and the father said,

"Don't you want to go, Willie?"

The little lip quivered but the child answered,

"Yes, papa, if you wish."

The child was strangely silent during the drive, and when the carriage drove up to the entrance he clung to his mother's side and looked up in her face with pathetic wistfulness.

The party alighted and walked among the graves and along the tree-shadowed avenues, looking at the inscriptions on the last resting-places of the dwellers in the beautiful city of the dead. After an hour or so thus spent they returned to the carriage, and the father lifted his little son to his seat. The child looked surprised, drew a breath of relief, and asked,

"Why, am I going back with you?"

"Of course you are; why not?"

"I thought when they took little boys to the cemetery they left them there", said the child.

Many a man does not show the heroism in the face of death that this child evinced in what to him had evidently been a summons to leave the world.

John Erickson is giving serious thought to starting a school library. There was an interesting short article in the December 1890 *Gazette* which had caught his eye. A New Zealand teacher was describing how he had set up a cheap school library.

> My plan is exceedingly simple. I take into the room a few attractive books, and tell the boys that they are my contribution to their library. The class-teacher usually adds a few more, and the boys are then told that anyone wishing to become a member has only to lend a book to the library. This book must first be brought to me for approval. If I think it will do I initial it, and the boy then takes it to the teacher. I need not say that no books are accepted unless I feel sure that they are such as boys will read.
>
> In a large school like the Normal I find it convenient to have three distinct libraries — one for the Third Standard, one for the Fourth, and one for the Fifth and Sixth combined. In this way the sympathies of all the class-teachers are enlisted; the labor of changing the books and keeping the records is lightened by subdivision; and the boys lend their books more freely when they know that no one but their own classfellows will have the privilege of taking them out. As the boys go through the standards their books go with them. The main library therefore, at the top of the school, receives a large accession of books every year, while at the same time a fresh library is founded in the Third Standard. Thus a healthy circulation is kept up, and the library never becomes stale. So much is this the case that boys frequently go on taking books out for years after they leave.
>
> In order that you may be able to see the kind of book we get, and the scale on which we are able to work, I send you the catalogues of the

respective libraries. You will notice that there are over 300 volumes in the main library, over 100 in the Fourth Standard, and 30 in the Third Standard. The total number of boys on the roll is about 360.

It may occur to you that, as the books are only lent, there must be a steady drain as the boys leave. In practice, however, we lose very few books in this way; the boys nearly always leave them on the shelves.

It will be plain, I think, that a library formed on this plan is easily and cheaply started, and is self-supporting. It is the teacher's own fault if there is any lumber on the shelves. He has only to exercise reasonable care to ensure that the large majority of the books shall be 'effectives'. In this way only can a school library be popular.

The plan has been adopted with uniform success at the East Christchurch, at the West Christchurch, and the Papanui Schools, and I see no reason why it should not be found useful in the country as well as in the towns.

William Wilson

"Normal School, Christchurch, April 29th, 1890."

That evening John Erickson again goes over the *Gazette* notice of July 1890 on the Regulations affecting the Course of Instruction and the Examination of Schools. He is given fairly explicit instructions. The aim of the teacher, say the Regulations, should be to secure intelligent and expressive reading in all classes. Pupils should be made to understand what they read, and then to read in such a way as to show that the meaning has been grasped. To achieve this end, explanation, illustration and pattern reading must be frequent.

Simultaneous reading, if judiciously used, will be found very valuable. The teacher should first read the passage with correct inflexion and emphasis, and then cause the pupils to repeat it after him. If he finds that they cannot give the proper emphasis and modulation with their books before them it will be well to make the attempt with their books closed. Every effort must be made to prevent the children from falling into a monotonous and sing-song style.

Special attention is called to the arrangement by which extra marks are allowed for good expression and an intelligent knowledge of the subject matter. After reading a lesson the pupils should be required to give the substance of it in their own words (with the assistance of questions from the teacher if necessary), care being taken to see that complete sentences are always used. This plan affords good training in language. In order to see that separate words are properly understood, the children should be practised in forming them into fresh sentences rather than in giving synonyms.

It should not be considered that the teacher's work is completed, if his pupils can read correctly the words of the textbook which happens to be specified for the class. His aim should be to develop a love of reading as far as possible. With this end in view, it is suggested that some time might be devoted to reading aloud interesting stories, accounts of travel, or the like, the readers being selected from the best scholars. Probably such reading might be given with advantage during the lessons in needlework.

In his study in North Adelaide, Dr. Emil Jung composes his annual report to the Minister in charge of Education. It is late afternoon in December and it has been a hot day. He looks back over the notes he has made of innumerable school examinations, and compiles his statistics.

"I think", he writes, after judiciously examining his pen, "that teachers in general commit the error of not reading to the children first and then asking them to imitate the example they have set. Recitation if it were more practised than at present, would have a good effect on the reading. Thus it remains a matter of regret that so many teachers should rest satisfied with teaching the mere utterance of words without comprehension of the ideas they express."

Then the statistics:

	% Passed	% Failed
Class I	30.12	69.88
Class II	48.63	51.37
Class III	53.52	46.48
Class IV	62.67	37.73

From which we gather that Mr. Inspector Dr. Emil C. Jung is a bit of a holy terror.

In another study Inspector Neale composes his report. He is greatly excited over the "Look and Say" — phonics controversy. "Reading", he writes, "must always be the relatively weak subject of any public school system for obvious reasons, but it is now abundantly clear that the introduction of the *Children's Hour* has considerably raised the standards of the upper classes.

A love of reading for its own sake is shown in so many places, and the result is seen in the courage and pleasure with which previously unseen pieces are attempted. A few years ago teachers would interpose to prevent testing by lesson not yet read. In the lower classes the phonic method of teaching reading is accomplishing marvels when intelligently applied. I greatly regret to find in the small minority of schools that old fashioned plans are still continued and the sounds or powers of the letters only taught just at the end of the year to secure a pass in them at the annual examination.

Those teachers who take pains to see that every child knows every sound testify to the value of the method. With this knowledge (which can be given to the youngest in a few weeks), a child can explore for himself and reach astonishing efficiency. Yet a few teachers will grind at 'Look and Say', not seeing that when one lesson is mastered the pupil is but little more able to do the next. Indeed, the experiment of 'Look and Say' proceeds pretty much on the assumption that little has been learned for he patterns every word of the new lesson as he

did with the first. It is easy to teach a child the exact sound of a letter as of a word. Teach 40 or 50 words and the pupil is still helpless; teach the same number of sounds thoroughly and most young children's books are easily read. Teachers have given me instances of children being able to read the First Primer within a few weeks of starting the letters, and I am personally acquainted with instances of fluent reading of the Second Primer with six or seven weeks tuition. Beyond all doubt the method is scientific, and it is greatly to be regretted that even a few teachers should be blinded by prejudice on this question."

Plus ca change, plus C'est la meme chose.

"The more things change, the more they are the same."

We may now watch colour television, or drive cars along the same roads which Inspector Jung jolted over in his pony trap but the categories abide. The fundamental concerns are the same. In the matter of reading we can identify now, as then:

- the methodologies employed by teachers
- the kinds of reading materials used
- the kinds of training that teachers have, and the degree of their professional freedom and status
- the evaluation of reading progress.

Suffice it to say that, while in many of our schools that perspicacious gentleman, Dr. Emil Jung, would feel quite at home in the reading field, he would be aware of a tremendous increase in sophistication.

I'm sure he would feel quite at home with certain reading series. "Can the man fan the tan van" is of the same semantic order as "the red pig did a jig on the log".

Our talk of relevance in reading would interest him. I suspect that one of the reasons for his interest in the *Children's Hour* was that it spoke of things from the environment of the children.

He, as an Inspector of Schools, would be taken aback, I suspect, by the status and self-confidence of teachers. He would not be used to people arguing with him, questioning his judgement, proposing alternative solutions to problems. He would not be used to teachers actually knowing more than he about reading, and the South Australian Reading Development Centre would fill him with amazement.

I say none of this to poke fun at a previous age. We are all products of what has gone before. The children's literature movement would please him and I know our school libraries would reduce him to an incoherence of delight. The colour, the size of print, the kinds of stories would be for him an occasion for applause. The advances in the technology of printing with colour, cheapness, photography and

excellent illustration would similarly meet with his unqualified approval.

Our methods of teaching reading would fascinate him. In some instances he might even be fascinated by an absence of method, and one can picture him thundering in his annual report to the Minister that "in some schools, teachers have wantonly and unadvisedly sacrificed their influence to a paltry box of tricks designated a reading laboratory". He, as well as the Bullock Committee, would recognize that the teacher is the most important variable.

I suspect that he would be bemused, but professionally fascinated, by the analysis of the reading process and the proliferation of reading schemes. But few innovations are truly original. What we have gained, I think is a *detailed* knowledge of what is involved in reading. We know a great deal more about the conditions under which it flourishes best. And I am sure that children now are reading more widely, with greater interest and with greater grasp than those Edithburgh children whom Inspector Jung interrogated in the 1890's.

So while the categories abide, the detailed knowledge has increased. Our concerns are the same, but our recognition of the complexity of reading has clarified.

For instance, we know that relevance in reading material is more than writing stuff at a child's level. It is linked to social class as well. Thus while for some children the aseptic aproned mother with two children, a white collar father, a green lawn, a car and a house in a nice suburb is recognizable and acceptable, for the slum kid, or the aboriginal kid, it is a foreign country. You may as well be reading about the Jones family on the backside of the moon. Perhaps the *Times Educational Supplement* has said the last word on this:

My name is Wayne.
My name is Sonia.
My mother is a cleaner in a posh house.
Two kids live there.
They are called Janet and John.
They are a right pair of drips.
They are always looking up at aeroplanes, shouting
"Look, mummy."
We think they are round the twist.
They have a dog called Scot.
We have a dog called Tiger.
Tiger ate Scot.
John said, "Naughty doggy".
I thumped John.
Sonia slugged Janet.

Their mother did her nut.
My mother fetched her a ripe swipe.
Janet said, "Look John, Mummy is in the tree. Look, John".
Mother got the boot.
Mother now works in the boozer.
She brings free samples from work.

Similarly, we are more aware of the subtle ways in which attitudes can be developed through reading materials. Dr. Jung would want to use this, and school texts glorifying unashamedly the great Pax Britannica were produced i.e. the Royal Readers. Britain did rule the world, South Australia was one of its colonies — those were facts. Matters were very much black and white. We are less sure. We talk uncertainly about options for different life styles, about discrimination. We are concerned, and rightly so in my view, about racial discrimination and sex role bias in reading materials.

We are more concerned, I think, about children being skilled in reading. We cannot lightly discuss failure and we have done more than Mr. Jung would dream possible to help those in difficulty. We talk about a 'right to read' as almost a basic human right. We are very sensitive to criticism about our failure to teach reading and are uncertain about standards.

Reading has a future as well as a past. Perhaps we ought to think of widening the concept. McLuhan tells us that the age of print is dead. We have new symbols to interpret, new emotions to deal with. What are the methodologies for reading television, for cracking the advertising code? The world of pop radio, of automation, of simultaneous Wimbledons requires new skills if we are to interpret the symbols meaningfully and with power.

But print stays with us. Let me finish with an affirmation, which is also an insight Prince Modupe wrote of his encounter with the written word in his West African days:

> The one crowded space in Father Perry's house was his bookshelves. I gradually came to understand that the marks on the pages were 'trapped words'. Anyone could learn to decipher the symbols and turn the trapped words loose again into speech. The ink of the print trapped the thoughts: they could no more get away than a deer could get out of a pit. When the full realization of what this meant flooded over me, I shivered with the intensity of my desire to learn to do this wondrous thing myself.

THE BULLOCK REPORT AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

2

Donald Moyle

The Bullock Report, for those of you who have not seen it, has 690 pages, it weighs 2½ pounds, costs in Britain £5, but we're going to charge you more for it.

Everybody has a problem. The Bullock Report, of course, arose from a problem. Everybody says we have a reading problem. It would seem to me that we wouldn't have any newspapers if there weren't any problems about. Gephart (1970) writes:

> Many statements have been made which assert that our society has a reading problem. These assertions have been made with sufficient authority and frequency that they have been accepted as fact. A reading problem exists. What is the desirable level of reading competence to be achieved by the individual in our society? And even more basically, what level of reading competence is necessary to function in our culture? Neither of these questions has been answered on an empirical or a logical basis.

And certainly, when one looks at the problem, that, in Britain resulted in this Report, it does seem that we are faced with something that is quite immense.

We start off from the basis that 50 per cent of the world's population cannot read at all. Most of this 50 per cent have, in fact, never had the opportunity, and although the percentage has gone down, the total numbers who cannot read in the world, because of the population explosion, continue to grow. If one looks at the British reading problem, the aspect that really concerns us, is the suggestion that between 1948 and 1972, we produced 3.7 per cent of children who at fifteen years of age had not reached the old UNESCO standard for literacy — given as the attainment of the average nine year old.

However, as I indicated, we have all sorts of problems. One of our big problems at the moment is finance, and we have been borrowing at the rate of five per cent per month for the last two years. A good deal of this money has come from Saudi Arabia, 92 per cent of whose residents are illiterate. I suggest against the background of such information, that there is really no cause for panic in the developed countries of the world.

The Report itself arose from the national press complaining

bitterly about the failure of our school system when Start and Wells (1972) reported the results of the 70/71 survey. Margaret Thatcher, the then Secretary of State for Education, decided that in order to prevent wasting Government expenditure on lots of large programmes, she would make a lesser involvement and have a Committee examine it for a period of time. It was perhaps rather wise of her, because there were all sorts of solutions poured out in the press; people began to panic and look for bigger and better materials in order to improve reading. A careful consideration of what we needed to do seemed rather important. So 21 people started out (two dropped by the wayside en route), meeting for one day every fortnight, and did this for over two years. The Report was finished, in actual fact, on 27th July, 1974. It was supposed to have been published on 1st April, 1974, and I had planned a conference in July, lasting a week, to examine it. We had to change our minds, and produce a companion volume titled *Reading: What of the Future?* (1975), which compares lots of ideas and reaches lots of similar conclusions to the Bullock Report.

But let us examine the 1970/71 survey and what the Bullock Report says about it, because it is essential that we start from the same point in examining this report. I obviously cannot cover the whole of the information that has been absolutely crammed into 609 pages. However, looking at the question of standards, it is really very interesting, because all the national dailies in Britain looked at the figures which Start and Wells produced and came to the conclusion that there had been a fantastic decline in British reading standards. It was blamed on all sorts of things, mainly of course, progressive education. When eventually the panel went to survey the schools, and they visited some of what they felt were progressive schools, they really could not find any reason why this message should have got abroad. In very few schools did they find that there was an inattention to reading and other basic skills. Further, the suggestion that the progressive movement had caused a decline in standards seemed to be contradicted by the fact that the movement certainly had not gathered enough momentum to produce the present adult difficulties and the difficulties among the fifteen year olds.

However, looking at the actual figures we find that the only point at which the decline is significant is the one group of eleven year olds on one of the two tests used. Even then the decline is only significant at the five per cent level. The fifteen year olds, as far as the figures suggest, were at the same level as fifteen year olds were eight years earlier; in other words, they had on average, roughly the same attainment. On one of the tests, the eleven year olds, were also standing still, but on the other test they appeared to have regressed,

on average four months a child.

Now one has to think about this survey, because Start and Wells were very, very careful to point out such things as the number of schools who were selected to take part and refused, so that the sampling procedure began to collapse. They also turned their attention to the actual tests themselves and found in the Watts Vernon Test words which they described as 'antique'. This is very interesting, as I think one needs to look at the assessing of figures in the light of this particular test. It is a test which lasts ten minutes, yet which attempts to cover the range of attainment from the five year old to about the average level of the sixteen to seventeen year old. It has thirty five items and suggests that a child who was highly intelligent and creative would, in seven of the questions, find a better answer than the examiner was going to mark right. However, what one must say about these tests, although they tell something, they do not tell us very much. They are no real guide as to how far we are succeeding to produce effective readers, because, if you test two children on our existing tests and find that they both are average nine year olds, you will find they vary considerably in their ability to complete any real-life reading task.

The sort of thing that the Bullock Report requests we look at in the future in regard to testing, is first, that we test by observation of ability to complete real-life reading tasks, and second, that we look much more closely at understanding, because very often sentence completion tests test little more than literal comprehension. This latter is not the sort of comprehension which is going to be of great value towards the creation of effective readers. But there are all sorts of ways of adding to this testing of quality.

One of them of course is the measure of the frequency of reading among the adult population. You may be quite staggered that in the American Adult Functional Reading Study, Murphy (1973) suggested that the average American reads for 90 minutes every day. When you take out those whose reading is almost non-existent, the average American who is capable of reading, reads for two hours every day. In 1957 for the first time in Britain a survey suggested that 50 per cent of our population read at least one book for pleasure in the previous year: and this may not seem very high but it has been climbing steadily over the years. It is not significant, of course; the other 50 per cent may be reading all sorts of other things, but the book was thought of as a good indicator of those people who were likely to be effective readers. It is rather interesting to note, that although only 50 per cent reported they had read a book, in fact, the average British adult in that year, according to our Library Association and book-

sellers' figures, read thirty books that year. So somebody did more than his share!

The Bullock Committee suggested that there was no evidence of falling standards. They looked, not only at the Start and Wells survey, but at all the other surveys that had been conducted in Britain over the years since the Second World War. Remember this conclusion was reached by twenty-one experts working together, spending over two years studying all the evidence, looking at all the schools, weighing up everything that was going on. Rather intriguingly, the Editor of the *Daily Telegraph* was able to state, immediately after the Report was published "But of course, there is plenty of evidence that standards have declined".

At the same time the Committee commented that there was no reason for smugness at all; for all sorts of reasons progress must be made, and our reading standards are not really good enough. One reason, of course, is that we are having too many failures in the system. A second reason is that we were not producing enough children who had a love of literature and good attitudes towards reading, who are able to make reading a useful part of their life. But one of the most interesting points is the suggestion that the demands of society with regard to literacy are constantly increasing.

In a survey of British newspapers in 1948, it was found that the *Daily Mirror* was the simplest to read. On average, it had a readability age level of nine years. The writer replicated this research (Moyle, 1972).

At the same time, the leader page in the *Daily Mirror* had an average reading level of twelve years eight months. The main news section had an average reading level of twelve years five months, the sports page an average reading level of thirteen years nine months and the women's page an average reading level of eleven years six months.

Wherever you go in our society at the present time, there is really no doubt that there are more extensive demands on reading in every day life that there have ever been before. A new, not only a higher, level of ability, but also a newer insight is necessary if we are to preserve our individuality.

There is no doubt at all that to preserve our individuality, to extend our own ability to think, to consider and make the judgements that face us every day, we are more and more dependent on our ability to examine critically, and process against our own thinking and experience, that material which comes to us through print. If we depend on the other media, however modern they seem to be getting and more controllable than they used to be, we are still very much in

danger of finding that we are moulded to someone else's view of what we should be.

Of course, too many of our readers are ineffective. We notice this particularly at the study level but it is apparent at all sorts of levels. One of the most interesting examples of research suggesting that many people were ineffective readers was the Adult Functional Reading Study conducted in the United States. From this study it is quite amazing how many women's cakes become sad because women do not read the recipe correctly, not just because they haven't the fingers or the art in producing a cake. In the American Army as well, to remain with the cooking allegory, the only branch where they obtained one hundred per cent accuracy in reading instruction (in other words, the readability of most of the instructions produced was too high for most of the people in that work force) was the cooks'. We now know that because of reading ability the American Army marches on its belly!

Because of these and many other demands now made by society, the first major change from the British point of view must be a change of policy. The Bullock Report insists that every school staff and schools which feed each other across the age ranges, get together and work out a co-ordinated policy for language and reading. Because of the demand for freedom and individuality among British teachers, syllabuses and schemes of work have tended to disappear. Of course, they were usually imposed in the past by authority of a head teacher. Now in many schools we have no pattern and the Report demands that we should find one, and that the school staff should be responsible for working it out together. The Report gives many guidelines and much practical help in this area and there is no reason why that should not go ahead with a little bit of enthusiasm on the part of school staffs. Unfortunately, the Report lost some of its impact for the Secretary of State in his foreword to it said that for the time being the recommendations of the Committee which needed additional resources would have to await implementation until such time as the economy improved.

The Bullock Report suggests a number of areas which require policy decisions. The first area is the development of language. The Bullock Report suggests that language itself is being neglected and that without attending to language we shall not get the results we want in reading, either. And so it looks at the two together but language particularly first of all. In relation to this particular section, it suggests that there is no room for formal language teaching but a lot of room for drawing out of the experiences of children, of their writing, of the books that they read, a good deal of the knowledge of words and the

way in which words are given meanings by the context in which they occur.

There is no doubt that linguistic understanding needs attention in order for reading to come alive. For example, I have discovered that there are very few seven year olds who can fully comprehend a sentence which has a pronoun in it, the referent of which falls in another sentence. At the secondary level the problem is extremely interesting, because obviously there is a reading task which in some sense is specific to the subject.

In Britain there is a tremendous demand for scientists and we are just not producing them. So we need to look at this. I am quite sure that for many children it might not be a lack of interest in science, or a lack of ability in science but the fact that science teachers have insisted that experiments have to be written up in the passive voice and eleven year olds do not, as a rule, use the passive voice in conversation, nor do most of them understand it. If passive voice is going to be used, then teachers must teach them how to use it.

Another interesting example arises from work I did on readability (Moyle, 1970). I discovered that in the Griffin Series Book Five was more difficult than Book Six. And yet there are more new words in Book Six than there are in Book Five; the vocabulary itself is not particularly more difficult and, anyway, you cannot do much about it because the twelve books form twelve chapters of one story. From this finding, then, came the suggestion that it was the look of the book, the description of the storm, the figurative language being used, that caused difficulty. In order to get children to read the book, what you needed to do to overcome their difficulty, was not lots of practice on vocabulary, reading games and apparatus, but to discuss storms and the language used to describe them. The Bullock Report acknowledges this point and stresses the importance of discussion in extending children's understanding of what they have read.

Recently I have been doing discussion work with stories in serial form and found many things out about children which I would probably never have discovered by listening to them read or setting comprehension questions. One story was quite clearly set in a jungle. The group of five children in trying to establish what was going to happen, realised they needed to find out where this little adventure was taking place. It was quite strange. In the story there was a 'she' tied to a stake by the neck, which suggested to one child that it was a German Concentration Camp. Two of the children, however, decided that it was taking place at sea. They could bring no supportive evidence. All the evidence seemed to be against them, but eventually one boy read out with considerable clarity the fact that 'she' who was

tied to the stake was 'suffering from agonising waves of pain'.

The Report says that reading must be developmental and therefore has implications for all teachers. It suggests first of all that we need to support parents so that the pre-school period is effective in developing attitudes and abilities for language work. It suggests too, that the best way of obtaining continuing interest and help from parents is to bring them into the classroom and use their expertise in various ways. It suggests that the English teacher in the secondary school should instruct his colleagues from other subject areas and work out the reading task in their subject together with them, so that the children may have reading help alongside the content work.

Secondary colleagues are not always convinced that there is a reading task at that level. However, research in the United States, which looked at undergraduates at Harvard, found that eighty three per cent of them were very poor at being able to go to a library, having got a purpose in mind, and some information they wanted to get hold of, and find that information quickly (Perry, 1959). Their library and reference skills were rather poor and their ability to survey a journal or a book was really quite low. Keith Gardner in Britain found that tremendous numbers of university students at Nottingham read as much as four items more than they needed to read in order to fulfil a given purpose. There has been a tendency over the years, because of the way reading has been taught, to make the adult inflexible in his reading strategy. Very often he has little idea of how to vary his pace, his reading set and reading strategy in terms of his purpose and the media he is using.

How is this situation going to change? How is it going to be improved? The Bullock Committee placed great weight on the fact that reading should be changed from a consideration of a set of skills, which they feel has held back its progress, and in its place purpose and meaning should be interposed. It requests all teachers that they never put a child through a situation where he is asked to do something simply because it improves his reading. There must always be another outcome in terms of enjoyment or in terms of purposes fulfilled. Gardner (1968) suggested that all too often reading teaching merely produced "more statistically respectable non-readers".

Over the years various controversies about materials and methods have tended to destroy the wholeness and the beauty of the act. But the look-say/phonic controversy has done something even worse — it has drawn the attention of teachers and readers away from meaning and has suggested to them that reading is about processing words. Reading is not about words, reading is about the interaction of two people with different experiences, varying ideas, thinking processes

and emotions. Unless there is that interaction and reaction going on, the reading that is done is hardly worthwhile. When it is not present you produce children, who, in fact, very often can read but don't. This is not to say, incidentally, in case anybody misquotes me, that the skills do not need teaching. But they are taught as part of the meaning involvement. The plea is for a greater basis of purpose and range of media in the classroom situation.

The Report says that one of the things a reading teacher must do is to engender a love of books; it also says we use them too much in our earlier years of schooling. This might be one of the reasons why various researchers over the years have shown that children at the early primary stage are reading several books and then, as they go on through school life, the number read gradually decreases. The second thing is that, if we only use one sort of media, we have not prepared the child for life at the adult stage. We have not put reading in the realistic situation from the point of view of children at this point of time, so that they can make use of it and enjoy it. We need to ensure that the children have the opportunity to meet all types of human purposes. This will solve the second problem and we will find that we also get the full range of media. So when your adult comes to that crucial stage where he has got to fight the tax people, he will be able to read the information and fill in the form correctly.

The Report looks at the whole methods and materials question, and acknowledges that there must be a sequence of learning within the reading process. It also states quite clearly that it can find no evidence anywhere that there is a sequence of skill learning which is set by the task itself. I would suggest that if you are giving children phonic help, you do not use a phonic programme. If you do, the possibility is that the children will forget the sounds they have learned because they are probably not using them in other parts of their reading work. Rather, phonics should be taught in relation to the words that the children are using at any given moment in time. The whole idea of structure should be seen in terms of children's needs in relation to tasks they undertake. The importance of this is seen not merely in the question of how much sequence and structure we must have but it is seen equally well in the whole question of transfer of learning. We can teach skills that the children do not know how to apply and we have really got to get to grips with realism in order that transfer can take place.

One very large part of the Report with which I must conclude is that which deals with teacher training and here we have some very interesting information. It is a report for teachers and it is full of practical advice. It is valuable not only for the student of reading but

also for the classroom teacher. There are many practical examples which can be followed up. Because it is a teachers' report and because the report is committed to teachers, then it asks quite a lot of teacher education.

First of all it suggests that all teachers should have a course in Language in Education. It suggests also that this course should be not less than one hundred hours and, preferably one hundred and fifty hours. I take issue with the Report on this point because I believe many College courses already contain more hours than this when everything that they are doing is totalled.

Some of the headings of the types of content suggested in the specimen syllabuses for pre-service training which the Report includes are listed below:

The historical introduction of language change and stability, a sketch of linguistic theory, with psychological and sociological links. Communication in the context of positive and effective development, covering the goals, the social and psychological factors, the style and dialect of speech. The communicative event, the strategies and tactics in accomplishing communication goals. How to organize information and assess and select procedures. The skills, structures and substance of language, the form of language, the function of language, the area of self-development, the skills and strategies, developmental analysis and evaluation, learning to use verbal skills, interdependence of resources and skills, the development of concept formation, organisation of language and reading in the curriculum. The varieties of media for learning, all the area of reading and all the area of speech. The evaluation of learning media, the use of language across all areas of the curriculum, the teaching of the individual child, the assessment, the creativity, the planning, of activities and the treatment of problems. The development of the language curriculum, the evaluation of teaching materials and procedures in use and the development of resources.

The Report suggests that every school should have a resource person as a language specialist, not a mere reading specialist, but a language specialist. It makes a clear statement that this person would not spend the majority of his time in a withdrawal situation helping children or groups of children with language or reading problems, although this might be a small part of his task. It sees the language specialist in an advisory or support role to the classroom teachers. It is committed to the integration of learning and therefore feels that the withdrawal system, although successful in some ways, is less effective for the child than having a full range of activities in the classroom. In the secondary school, the resource or specialist teacher would be

supporting the various subject areas in order to ensure that in each subject, those elements which are necessary to process the language and thinking in that subject area are taught. The Report suggests that such advisory teachers after their pre-service training and after a period of experience will need to have further training of only some thirty hours duration. I suggest that there are very few colleagues who could respect that amount of training as creating someone with special expertise across such a wide area. And I suggest that in order to become a specialist of this sort a year's full time training is necessary.

However, the Report goes on to suggest that these people themselves should be supported by specialist advisory teachers who would be responsible for a group of schools. The specialist advisory teachers would be more narrow in the specialism, in that there would be one for remedial reading work, one for English as a second language, and one for the teaching of English in secondary school. The whole team should be under the guidance and supervision, within a local authority of a senior adviser for English. The use of the term English turns me off right away, because in England English means English literature and I foresee that such positions would be filled by people whose backgrounds are just that. And although I acknowledge that some of my academic colleagues in English do have a wide view in the use of language and communication, at the same time there are many others in schools, not least the teacher of young children, who have an equally wide view and understanding of language needs. Further, I feel that the title limits the recruitment of the type of people we will want. When you get to the senior inspector level, the Bullock Report says they can have a year's training.

The Committee did not think they were going to get any money so they tried to reduce the amount of training needed to what was possible at that moment in time. If you think of producing a reading specialist for every school in Britain, some 80,000 of them, there is going to be great difficulty in finding people who could run courses to train them. We have a great problem on our hands and this is where the Report's further suggestion that there should be a Centre for Language in Education in Britain has, in fact, the seeds of a way in which we could do this and a lot of other things besides. A Centre for Language in Education could provide all sorts of courses, but in providing the sorts of courses to support the Bullock ideas, it would be a very long time before we could produce sufficient specialists. What we need is the production of background materials so that tutor involvement is minimal. In the last few years in Britain the Open University's Reading Development Course, which is only equivalent

of a half-term full time course (approximately seven weeks full time), has now been taken by 10,000 teachers. I would suggest a marriage of an extended Open University Course with tutorial services provided by Centres for Language in Education such as we have established at Edge Hill College. Such Centres would gather together all people with expertise in the areas as a team.

As I go round, not only England, but the rest of the world, it seems that there is a sapping of confidence among many teachers; that newspapers have done education a dis-service in conveying the idea that successes in schools are the products of good middle class backgrounds and that failures are the products of teachers.

Teachers and society in general still look for a method or set of materials which will provide a panacea for the curing of all our ills. We shall not find it. The Bullock Report sees the teacher as the agent of success.

I must warn you, however, that when a child fails, I shall undoubtedly blame the teacher but when the child succeeds I shall praise his teacher. Teaching is a difficult task; it is done not by books, not by materials, not even by inspiring reports such as *A Language for Life*, but by the fact that teachers interact with and help children.

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THE IDENTIFICATION OF READING DIFFICULTIES

3

John Elkins

The problem of late identification of reading difficulties has been highlighted in recent years. If we look at the most extreme example, adult illiteracy, it seems as if many of the emotional and adjustment difficulties faced by adult poor readers might well have been due to the unsatisfactory nature of their school experience even more than to the problems they face in adult life. Indeed, we can say with some confidence that until recent years, we have identified reading difficulties too late and permitted failure to be a continuing experience for many.

How Early Can We Identify Reading Difficulties?

Before attempting an answer to this question, I want to caution against the idea that an efficient system of early identification relieves teachers of the responsibility of watching for signs that students are experiencing difficulty in using reading for any purpose. This caution applies at all levels — upper primary, secondary and tertiary. There are continuing responsibilities for identification of difficulties throughout education at all levels, and these responsibilities rest upon the whole teaching community, not just the specialists in language.

Next, it must be remembered that identification is only the beginning. We need to consider not only how to identify that a difficulty exists, but also how the identification should lead towards ameliorative action.

It is also necessary to distinguish early identification from prediction. There are some very real problems associated with predicting reading difficulties. At the present stage, it may be a fruitless, or worse, a harmful procedure to engage in prediction of reading difficulties (Keogh and Becker, 1973, Adelman and Feshbach, 1971). The rationale which underlies the selection of many of the observations and tests used in predicting reading difficulties is derived from the assumption that these problems have their roots in the child's early development, and that these antecedent behaviours can be translated empirically into identifiable criteria (Shipe and Miezitis, 1969). It is easy to conclude that preschool developmental delays and anoma-

lies are causes of later school failure, and many screening instruments have been developed which incorporate measures of atypical pre-school development, for example, *The Frostig Developmental Test of Visual Perception* (Frostig, Lefever and Whittlesey, 1961). Such approaches and instruments have been much criticized in recent years (Mann, 1971).

There is an important counter argument for early identification of strengths in what Keogh and Becker (1973) call a 'focus on competence'. This approach has the advantage that an emphasis on early success may help minimize later school failure. If we must predict, let us predict success, not failure.

Instead of a predictive mode, let us adopt a 'real-time' mode, to use the jargon of the computer scientist. If we are going to do this, we must find children when they experience problems — on the very day when they have a particular problem in learning to read. This means the issue of early identification is not a major one in which a characteristic pattern determines that the child will experience continuing difficulties with all aspects of reading. Rather, in each individual reading activity, there is the possibility that some child will experience some difficulty. By 'real-time' operation I mean that each teacher will endeavour to identify which child is having a particular difficulty with a particular task at a particular time. In my opinion the ability to operate in the above way is one characteristic which distinguishes good from bad teaching. If this is so, then there is good reason for ensuring that experienced teachers are placed with the early classes, since such teaching skills are rarely present in young teachers. Nonetheless, I believe that there are systematic ways of improving a teacher's skills in early and immediate identification of difficulties.

How Early Can Identification Be Achieved?

There is a real lesson to be learned from the New Zealand experience where much emphasis is placed upon sensitive early identification and intervention. In particular, Professor Marie Clay has developed procedures based on individual longitudinal observation of children learning to read (Clay, 1972a). She suggests that the first aspect that must be looked at is the child's reading behaviour in relation to a book which is seen as appropriate to his current stage (usually the book he is working on at a particular time). Suggestions are made about observing the child's oral reading, making a running record of his reading, noting exactly what the child does in a one-to-one situation. It may be preferable to record the oral reading to permit reanalysis. An analysis is then made based on the child's self-

correction behaviour; a characteristic which has been identified as being most significant in identifying those children who are mastering reading and those who are experiencing difficulties. I might add, in this respect, that some very interesting research is being done in New Zealand by Ted Glynn (Glynn and McNaughton, 1975). He has found that special class children, who are very poor readers and have I.Q's in the range 50-70, have made marked improvements in reading through systematic teaching, directed not at word knowledge, vocabulary, or phonics, but at the highest cognitive level of performance, that is, self-correction behaviour. It seems to me that we ought not assume that the level of intelligence is very significant in this study. Clay (1972b,c) has also developed a scheme for the early detection of reading difficulties which may be used routinely in the first year at school. It covers the following aspects of early reading:

Accuracy on Book Reading
- Running records
- Errors

Self-Correction
Directional Movement
Letter Identification
Concepts About Print
- Front of book
- Print tells the story
- What is a letter, word, first letter
- Function of the space
- Punctuation

Word Knowledge (based on Ready to Read series)
Writing Vocabulary

The test booklet *SAND* provides a variety of situations in which the teacher may read to the child and see the extent to which the child understands the concepts above. In this way she can distinguish between children who are using alternative strategies in order to appear to do what the teacher wants them to do, rather than using strategies which will lead them on to growth in reading.

Clay's work has been based on some two years of direct classroom observation of children, with very careful follow up studies. It is a practical system which has been tested by large numbers of experienced infant teachers in New Zealand.

Identification Of Difficulties At Higher Achievement Levels

I want now to move to a more advanced level in the identification of reading difficulties, based on the work of Kenneth Goodman (1968)

and his associates (Goodman and Burke. 1972). Whereas most of Marie Clay's work has been with early reading, Goodman has been more concerned with reading at later stages. Yetta Goodman and Carolyn Burke have developed a relatively straight forward procedure for analysing children's oral reading behaviour. A selection of material is given to a child to read and this is noted very carefully for all departures from the expected responses. Tape recording helps to increase the accuracy of the analysis. Categories used for the analysis are:

dialect
intonation
graphic similarity
sound similarity
grammatical function
correction
grammatical acceptability
semantic acceptability
meaning change
comprehension
grammatical relationships

The sort of anlysis that is used here demands that in a systematic manner, perhaps once every several months, each child has his oral reading behaviour studied in detai by the teacher. In this way, the teacher is able to focus upon aspects that are characteristic of that child's reading behaviour. For example, is the child beginning to use syntax, is the child bound by grapho-phonic relationships and so on? Again we have the possibility of identifying, not a child with a disability, but the sorts of difficulties that the child experiences in using the full range of strategies which are possible as he or she reads. Each child is worth studying. I have seen some children, whose performance on standardized reading tests was in the top ten per cent, for whom the strategies of reading were quite inadequate. One girl at third grade level could translate text to sound with remarkable accuracy and speed but had no other use of cues. She was unable to predict the message using syntax or meaning and I believe that in time she was likely to find reading difficult.

None of us can become competent readers until we are able to use the grammar and meaning in text, until we are able to relate our reading to our own experience, until, in fact, we have an interaction with the text so that reading is another way of experiencing life.

Can Standardized Tests Be Used?

I do not suggest that we abandon standardized tests. I think that almost any standardized reading test can be used diagnostically by teachers who want that sort of information, but I believe that they can never substitute for systematic surveying of the kind described earlier.

In this connexion, I want to comment on the recommendations of the Bullock Report, in particular, the idea of a system of monitoring

progress in reading. It seems to me that the problem with this recommendation is that we can never get a sufficient breadth of measurement from standardized tests. The Bullock Report (*A Language for Life*, 1975) regards monitoring of reading standards in a very restricted sense. We need to take the definition of monitoring used in the Bullock Report and expand its meaning, so that we develop ways of systematically examining what goes on in our classrooms. As teachers we must accept the responsibility for accountability. We have been content to let children slip through, year after year, with inadequate reading, often for the reason that we simply do not identify difficulties as they occur.

Can We Identify Silent Reading Difficulties?

So far I have considered early reading and the development of good oral reading behaviours. The next problem which should concern us is silent reading. I believe that silent reading ought to be taught and emphasized earlier in the school experience. We can easily over-emphasize oral reading behaviours to the detriment of the development of silent reading behaviours. But the problem is, how do we know what children do when they read silently? If it is difficult to know what they are doing when we give them a book and they recite sounds to us, how difficult is it then to know what they are doing if we ask them to read silently?

Although there are few clear cut answers here, two areas in which I have been involved recently have been very encouraging. With Mrs. Pat Gunn, I have been looking at ways of identifying what children do in silent reading using variations on the Cloze procedure. Cloze procedure is simply a situation in which we delete words from text and ask children to fill in the blanks. We have been trying to interpret the incorrect responses which children make.

For example, on the *GAP Reading Comprehension Test* (McLeod, 1967), children are faced with the following item.

"By her bed there was a little table to put a book or a toy . . ."

The need to cope with a lengthy surface structure is exemplified well in this case, and many children who respond with "bear" or "doll" show they have been influenced by immediate context only.

Analysis of the responses to the St. Lucia Reading Comprehension Tests (Elkins and Andrews, 1974) has generated a number of interesting patterns which are indicative of processing strategies. I want to suggest that if tests like the *GAP* are simply used to obtain reading ages or standardized scores, little is gained over using any other reading tests which are known to be of low diagnostic value. The possibilities for diagnosis on tests like the *GAP* are immense, if

teachers are sensitive to each child's responses, much can be learned about what the child does while reading silently.

Among the more interesting responses are difficulties with pronouns. For example, in the sentence, 'I ran to my Mother and told ————', children will tend to write "Mother" in the blank space. It is clear that the children have been able to 'read' all the words up to the space. The difference between the reading strategy when the child writes "Mother" and when the child writes "her", is in the way the child's implicit knowledge of language structures affects his prediction of future text. This is especially true of those structures which occur in written text which are not necessarily the same as apply in oral language. We have found that at an early stage, children are very disinclined to use pronouns, and sometimes the language they produce in Cloze type activities is very awkward and clumsy in style. If we assume that the materials that children are going to read will be like 'I ran to my Mother and told her' rather than ' I ran to my Mother and told Mother', then we should endeavour to promote silent reading strategies which result in appropriate predictions. We need to go beyond the notion of whether or not a child has been able to 'read' in any low level sense, and need to develop criteria for appropriateness of Cloze responses. It is not impossible for the teacher to wear a number of hats when using tests. Thus standardized tests may be used in the prescribed way, and while diagnostic uses are exploited to the full, other exciting possibilities for identification of children's difficulties relate to introspection into children's thinking about reading. Increasingly over the years, I have become convinced of the similarity that exists between good mathematics teaching and good teaching of reading. They are both characterized by teaching children to think. In each we try to see in children's errors glimmers of the ways in which they have thought to produce the errors.

Identification Through Diagnostic Teaching

We need to find ways, while actually teaching, of identifying difficulties which children have. My most recent experience has been in relation to Cloze type exercises which are given to children, and in which we look for signs that the children are having difficulties. By incorporating clear goals into each exercise we are then able to see whether the child can master each component. Among the examples which have been tried are continuous stories with nouns, verbs or adjectives deleted, and exercises which identify whether the child can deduce the deep structure and thus the meaning of complex syntax.

A. The girl (asked) the boy where to go.
(told)

What did the girl say?
She said, "————————————."

B. He painted the box that was blue.
He painted the ———— ————
blue box
blue paint
box blue
paint blue

By incorporating these exercises into discussion among the teacher and the children we can ensure that the children explore the various relationships among words in sentence structures. Indeed, the things that should be going on in good teaching of reading can be used with Cloze exercises. One advantage is that the children make written responses to the text which we may analyse to help us plan the next stage of reading instruction for each child.

As another example, consider an exercise in which a content word blank could not be determined by the child until he had read to the end of the paragraph. If this occurred in a test, one might feel a little unhappy, but in an exercise done in class, it had a clear purpose i.e. to show children that at times we need to read on in order to give meaning to unfamiliar content words. One of the things we face in silent reading is that as we read, we gradually develop a set of characteristics which become the meaning of the unknown word. This exercise was designed to show children there is a strategy which can be used.

Summary

I have chosen to discuss the early identification of children's reading difficulties as an ongoing process not confined simply to the early years. The emphasis in the word 'early' is upon the recognition of a particular difficulty as soon as possible after it has occurred. Suggestions are made for identifying problems during the first year, based largely on the work of Marie Clay. Then Goodman's sensitive analysis of oral reading miscues is suggested as a procedure which could be incorporated into a sensitive monitoring procedure over the years in which oral reading proficiency develops. A third aspect concerns silent reading and suggestions are made concerning diagnostic clues which could be obtained from Cloze procedure tests and exercises. By adopting a model of mastery learning as proposed by Carroll (1963) we are encouraged to view the identification of reading difficulties as formative evaluation (Bloom, Hastings and Madaus, 1971). It is my sincere hope that teachers can be encouraged and assisted to monitor their own classroom practices and the learning of

their students to the end that difficulties are identified promptly and instruction modified appropriately.

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THE READING PROCESS: SOME LIMITATIONS ON READING AND LEARNING TO READ

4

Ross O. M. Latham

In this paper an attempt is made to establish three basic points with regard to the act of reading. First, reading does not involve decoding writing or print to sound or speech. Second, the importance of the visual system in reading is thoroughly over-rated. Third, there are severe limitations in the way the brain functions that can make reading almost impossible if the reader attempts to make excessive use of the visual system (Smith, 1972, 1974). In addition, the relevance of these basic points to the classroom will be examined and the fundamental dilemma of the teacher will be outlined.

Receptive Language Processing

The function of language is communication. Thus, it has two aspects — production and perception. On the output, or production side, language may be spoken or written. On the input, or reception side, it may be heard or read. This paper is concerned with the perception of language. It is aimed at an explication of some fundamental aspects of the comprehension of written language (Latham, 1973). Thus, for the purposes of this presentation reading is defined as the communication of the meaning of an author with a reader by means of the printed page (Kolers, 1968). Reading, therefore, is viewed as an information-processing activity in as much as the printed form of language has information encoded in it that is available to those who know how to decode that form of language.

Print Represents Meaning Not Sound

The first point to be made is that the information encoded by print is *meaning* rather than *sound*. Thus, reading involves decoding to meaning not decoding to sound. In the early stages of acquiring skill in reading it may very well be that meaning-getting is mediated by means of sound production. But 'noise' is not the end-product of the reading act. It can only be used as an 'assist' for the reader in his early attempts to identify meaning and even then it is absolutely

crucial that the learner be 'let into the secret' that reading, right from the beginning, is for the purpose of identifying meaning.

We are confused by the sentence, "The buoy tolled hymn that he must knot bee scene bear inn hour rheum." The confusion stems not from the fact that the words do not represent the correct sounds, but rather, from the fact that they convey the incorrect meanings. In reading, meaning is not obtained by the reader's monitoring of the sounds he makes. In fact, in order to produce sounds that will be meaningful for another listener, the reader must first of all correctly identify the meaning to ensure his employment of appropriate intonational patterns.

An issue has to be made of the so-called decoding aspect (i.e., decoding to sound in the Chall, 1967, sense) of reading because of the number of people involved in producing reading programmes who apparently believe that child could never learn to recognize a word unless he could use phonic rules to unlock its sound. The staggering findings of Berdiansky, Cronnell and Koehler (1969), that 211 phoneme-grapheme correspondences are required to account for the pronunciation of 6,000 one- and two-syllable words in the spoken language vocabulary of six to nine year old children, would seem to be evidence enough that teaching phonic rules to children is, indeed, an exercise in futility. The fact that Berdiansky *et al.* divided their 211 correspondences into 166 rules and 45 exceptions should have been enough to daunt anybody at the prospect of attempting to teach beginning readers the so-called 'rules' before learning to read. Unfortunately, the researchers themselves could not see the ludicrous implications, for teaching, of their interesting findings and they are now teaching thousands of primary school children in California the rules they claim to have established. This unhappy situation has resulted from the researchers' consideration of only one aspect of the reading process or, rather more correctly, some of the characteristics of the English writing system (Smith, 1972).

The foregoing should not be construed as an assertion that a large store of phonic knowledge is not required for successful early reading. On the contrary, it is strongly believed that phonic knowledge is crucial when the early steps are being made. What is being asserted, however, is that teaching phonics is not teaching reading. Children must be taught: "No meaning, no reading" (Jacobs, 1971).

Reading is an Active Process

As long ago as 1908, it was proposed that reading is not a passive process (Huey, 1908). In summarizing the extant research, Huey concluded that much of the information on the page can be omitted

or merely sampled in a minimal way because much of it is redundant and because readers know about this redundancy — at least tacitly or implicitly. Reading, therefore, can be thought of as an active process to which the reader makes a most significant contribution. The information the reader picks up off the page is not complete until he supplements it with information he already possesses. Reading is not a faithful transmission to the brain of what is on the page (Huey, 1908). The critical question concerns the information that readers do use in their attempts to identify the meaning in written language.

Visual and Non-Visual Information

From the foregoing it can be appreciated that two quite different information sources are employed in the reading act. One source of information is the author or printer who provides the printed "squiggles" on the page. This information can usefully be termed "visual" information (Smith, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974). The other source of information is the reader himself. To be successful the reader must make a most significant contribution of his own. This second type of information can be described as "non-visual" information (Smith, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974).

Visual Information

At least at a superficial level, it is clear that the reader is confronted with a visual input comprised of letters, words, lines of print, and paragraphs of text set apart from each other. It is also obvious that letters and words possess a distinctiveness which assists in their identification. Recent research (Gibson, 1970) has suggested that attributes of letters such as horizontal lines, vertical lines, oblique lines, open curves, closed curves, ascending lines, descending lines, and so on, have the potential to become the distinctive visual features by means of which letters, and probably, words are identified. The difficulty with distinctive features is that different features comprise the criterial set for various occurrences of the same specific letter and this is largely a function of the immediate graphemic environment in which it is found and the sentence context in which words occur. Thus, in the sentence, "The boy was riding his *horse*," almost none of the distinctive features of *h o r s e*, considered in isolation, would become visual input for the reader. The compelling nature of the prior context is such that the reader only has to satisfy himself that the object being ridden was not a *bicycle, donkey, mule,* or *car,* etc. This decision can be made on a minimum of visual input. Compare this, however, with the nature of the task when the reader is required to identify, in isolation, *house* and then *horse*. In this example

the distinctive visual features of the letters, and especially the *r* and the *u*, become paramount.

It is not the purpose of this paper to provide an exhaustive examination of distinctive visual feature research and the importance of visual features in learning to read. The topic has been quite thoroughly examined in such sources as Samuels (1971), Neisser (1967), Lindsay and Norman (1972), as well as Gibson in the paper already cited.

Non-Visual Information

In spite of what has been stated above with regard to the criterial attributes of letters and words, the main purpose of this paper is to demonstrate that reading is not primarily a visual activity (Kolers 1968a, 1968b, Smith 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974). Reading is not a one-sided activity with the author supplying all the information or knowledge. The reader will not have the message delivered to him if he looks at the words on the page in the right order and with sufficient concentration. It is conceded that, indeed, the reader must have his eyes open in order to read. If he is sitting in the dark, then he must turn the light on in order to read. If he has a severe impairment of vision, then he must use whatever corrective lenses have been prescribed for him.

Keeping the visual system operating, however, is not sufficient. Suppose, for example, the written text is in a language totally unknown to the potential reader. No amount of careful visual processing will permit the 'reader' to apprehend the meaning that has been encoded in that foreign language. Thus, knowledge of language is crucial non-visual information that the reader must bring to the reading act himself. Again, very little identification of meaning (comprehension) will take place if the subject matter of what is being read is completely removed from the experience of the reader. An article on multi-variate analysis in statistics reads very much like a foreign language to the person who has no prior knowledge of statistical techniques. A life-on-the-farm story carries only minimal meaning for an inner-city Sydney child. The pseudo-adventures of the ubiquitous Fluff and Nip mean little to the aboriginal child whose introduction to the white man's civilization has only recently occurred at the Warburton Mission.

Obviously, a good deal of stored knowledge, both language and experimental, is required if any piece of written discourse is to be read so that everything the author takes for granted can be supplied by the reader from his store of non-visual knowledge.

The distinction between visual and non-visual information is a

very important one because of the interesting relationship that exists between them (Smith 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974). This relationship can be described as reciprocal. Readers can 'trade-off' the one for the other. In this way, the more non-visual information a reader can provide the less visual information he will require. Conversely, the less non-visual information a reader can supply, the more visual information he will have to obtain from the printed page. As will be seen, this reciprocal relationship has extremely important implications for beginning readers and those accomplished readers who are confronted with quite unfamiliar text .

Non-visual information is seen as being comprised of three components. These are, letter-sequence or grapho-phonic information, syntactic information, and semantic information, all three organized and integrated according to a conceptual framework (Goodman, 1970).

Grapho-phonic information. One important source of information used by the accomplished reader is his implicit knowledge of phonemic patterns, i.e., the letter-sequences that are permitted in the English orthographic system. For example, although they possess it as tacit knowledge, all accomplished readers of English know that the set of permissable initial consonant clusters is extremely small. There are those consonants that go with *l* as in *bl, cl, fl, gl* etc. those that go with *r* as in *br, cr, fr, gr,* etc., those that begin with *s* as in *sc, sk, sl, sm, sn, sp,* etc., and a few others like, *dw, tw,* and *qu.* Such readers also realize that the vowel and diphthong variations represent a quite small set. For example, the main lax vowels are i, e, a, o, u, and a matrix of the chief tense vowels can easily be constructed:

i + e	ie	y	igh	
e + e	ea	ee	y	ey
a + e	ai	ay	eigh	
o + e	oa	ow	oe	
u + e	ui	ue	ew	oo

Other useful sets of phonemic patterns that readers seem to know are: oi/oy and ow/ou; ar; er, ir, ur, or, ear (all sounding as in *worm*); and, or, au, aw, augh, ough, a(ll), a(lk), and so on. The interesting point is the constrained nature of letter-sequence information. It is a very small body of knowledge. Frequently, teachers erroneously give children the notion that they can't read because they do not have enough phonic knowledge and so they proceed to teach them this information, ad nauseum, and to the total exclusion of all the other far more useful strategies that readers can be taught to use.

Syntactic information. This term is used to describe the inter-

nalized knowledge of the structure of sentences and discourses that the vast majority of children bring to school with them. It is the type of knowledge that permits them to generate and comprehend sentences making use of three or four basic sentence patterns, eg., NVN, NV, NVNN, and N linking VN or Adv. or Adj. It is the knowledge that permits the accomplished reader to read the selection below and answer the questions that follow it.

The Marlup (Goodman, 1970)

A marlup was poving his kump. Parmily a narg horped some whev in his kump. "Why did vump horp whev in my frinkle kump?" the marlup jufd the narg. "Er'm muvvily trungy," the narg grupped. "Er heshed vump norpled whev in your kump. Do vump pove your kump frinkle?"

1. What did the narg horp in the marlup's kump?
2. What did the marlup juf the narg?
3. Was the narg trungy?
4. How do you think the marlup might pove his kump?

Semantic information. Because of the infinite nature of semantic information it is almost impossible to characterize it in any formal way. Perhaps it is sufficient to state that the semantic information possessed by any individual is the sum total of all his first-hand and vicarious experiences.

Conceptual framework. The above three informational components are organized within the cognitive structure of a reader according to some conceptual framework. It is proposed that such a framework involves the existence of categories possessed of identifying criterial attributes and of rules by means of which the relationships between them are controlled (Smith, 1971).

The Interaction of Syntactic and Semantic Components

In spoken language, the listener employs a perceptual strategy based upon higher level units than the single word. If he did not do this the comprehension of spoken language would be almost impossible. It is extremely likely that strings of spoken words are organized by the listener into cohesive groups.

In spoken language, the listener is assisted in this organization by the pattern of production employed by the speaker. The speaker provides signals which help the listener to group or chunk appropriate words. These signals are conveyed by variations in intonation — stress, pitch, juncture, as well as gestural signs in the context of situational knowledge mutual to speaker and listener. Naturally, the

motivation for this organization of output is to enhance the potential for the comprehension of input.

When the language input is via the visual modality, the reader needs to structure or organize that input for himself, in order to associate an acceptable meaning with it. In this case, however, many of the structuring signals, normally contributed by the speaker are absent. Clearly then, the reader has less data to assist him in achieving comprehension than does the listener. This data, missing from input, must be supplied from the reader's store of non-visual information.

It is proposed that one basic strategy in the comprehension of written discourse is the synthesizing of words into groups. The creation of these units enhances the reader's potential for identifying meaning (Latham, 1973).

Constraints in the visual and memory systems. One reason for this synthesizing strategy is the manner in which it tends to offset, first, constraints in the processing capacity of the visual information processing system, and, second, it assists in overcoming the severe bottleneck imposed by short term memory on the processing of incoming visual information. Short term memory is capable of simultaneously holding and processing only four or five separate entities. This applies whether such entities are separate letters, individual words, or chunks of meaning (syntacto-semantic units) comprised of several words each. Thus, the reader, by providing non-visual information in the form of syntactic and semantic-experimental knowledge, for the purpose of the meaningful grouping of individual words, renders written language comprehension dependent on fewer decision-making events (Smith, 1971, 1973). Fewer perceptual-cognitive decisions mean the potential for a more rapid rate at which the human brain assimilates written-language-transmitted messages (Latham, 1973).

Viewed in this way, comprehending connected strings of written words involves a succession of decision-making postponements motivated by the quality of the available non-visual information of the reader. Decisions are suppressed until the word elements in the visual array can be synthesized into a cohesive entity. This cohesion is provided by the interaction of syntactic and semantic information possessed by the reader, and jointly interacting with situational and experiential influences provided by both the writer and the reader.

Simultaneous synthesis. An essential aspect of the language processing strategy proposed here, is that it depends upon the simultaneous consideration of several words. As a result of this simultaneous focussing of attention upon more than one word, meaningful units are created by synthesis based on syntactic, semantic, and other

considerations (Luria, 1966a, 1966b).

An additional proposal is that the identification of verbal concepts and their synthesis into language segments proceed at the same time. This dual activity is a form of the parallel processing outlined by Neisser (1967). Decisions about segments are made as the result of the simultaneous consideration of one or more words which perform syntactic or lexical functions or both (Luria, 1966a, 1966b).

This synthesizing does not stop with the formation of meaningful segments. Rather, it is a hierarchical process by means of which lower level units are synthesized into higher level units. With the help of this process of repeated synthesis the meanings are reconstituted. The motivation for the formation of these higher level units is the establishment of the functional relationships in sentences, that is, the selection of coherent word groups and the identification of their function in the sentences as subject, verb, object, or modifier, etc., and the recognition of the semantic information that is encoded by such grammatical functions.

Thus, it is claimed that an important component in the understanding of written sentences is an appreciation of the information conveyed by grammatical entities and the functional relationships that obtain between them. It is further claimed that this apprehension of functional relationships is also dependent upon a form of simultaneous synthesis (Luria, 1966a, 1966b). That is, the simultaneous synthesis stems from the simultaneous consideration of the grammatical entities that are able, potentially, to be interrelated. The ability to perceive this potential for synthesis is under the control of the syntactic and semantic non-visual information possessed by the reader.

Information-Processing Bottlenecks

The fact that there is a 'trade-off' between visual and non-visual information is quite critical because there is a limit to the rate at which the human brain can deal with incoming visual information. This limitation is often overlooked because we tend to think of the eyes as the organs of 'seeing' and that we 'see' everything that is before our eyes. Actually, the eyes are the organs of 'looking'. It is their job to transmit messages back to the brain which does the actual 'seeing'. That is, the brain has the job of making the perceptual decisions about what we see (Smith, 1972). The crucial point is that there is a limit to how fast and how much visual information can be handled by the brain. The data relevant to this point have been carefully examined and documented elsewhere (see: Smith and Holmes, 1971).

Limitations of the Visual System

It is impossible from a single fixation to identify more than four or five different entities (Smith and Holmes, 1971). It is possible that more visual information may be available to the eyes, but four or five identifications are as much as the brain can manage from a single fixation. If a reader is permitted just one glance at a sequence of random letters, he will be able to identify no more than four or five of them and it will take a considerable time for him to identify them — something approaching one second. It is not necessary for the reader to be looking at the letters for the full time it takes him to identify them. A glimpse, lasting less than one twentieth of a second, is more than sufficient time for the eyes to pick up all the information that the brain can process in about one second. This is an important point because it explains why any attempt to speed up the three or four fixations that a child or an adult can make every second is normally a pointless endeavour since there is a limit to the information with which the human brain can cope.

This does not mean that readers are constrained to a reading speed of four or five letters a second. If the sequence of letters to be glimpsed by the reader is organized into a series of unrelated words, then he is able to identify about two words or approximately twice as many letters as he could from the random presentation. The eye of the reader is doing exactly the same amount of work. The difference lies in the fact that the brain can now make a significant contribution of the information it already possesses (non-visual, letter-sequence information).

The brain is capable of effecting even more significant economies in its use of the information that the eyes can pick up with one fixation. If the words the reader is permitted to glimpse are organized into a meaningful sentence, he will be able to identify about four words or up to approximately 20-30 letters. Again, the eyes are not picking up more information. The fact of the matter is that the brain can now make an even more significant contribution of syntacto-semantic non-visual information. It is capable of making a well-informed guess on the basis of what it already knows and the letter-sequence and syntactic redundancy of the language interacting with the semantic stream being generated.

When a reader is unable to make a significant contribution of non-visual information of the letter-sequence and syntacto-semantic varieties he is afflicted with tunnel-vision. This is the phenomenon that hinders the beginning reader, or the mature reader confronted with a text in an unknown language, or in an area of knowledge completely new to him (Mackworth, 1965).

Limitations of the Memory System

The problem of attempting to get too much information through the visual system is not the only one that can afflict the reader. There is another cognitive bottleneck that must be taken into account. It is that of memory (Norman, 1969). The capacity of short term memory is extremely small. If seriation is a significant factor, then the limitation, as with the visual system, is about four or five items. The important point is that these four or five entities do not need to be four or five letters, or four or five words. They can be four or five ideas or chunks of meaning. In fact, if meaning identification is to occur, the most efficient use of short term memory must be made by processing chunks of meaning. Again, the propensity to do this is a function of the non-visual knowledge already possessed by the reader.

There is also a severe limitation on the processing speed of long term memory. The rate at which new information can be put into long term memory is very slow and limited when compared with the more volatile short term memory. From three to five seconds are required to put one item of information into long term memory and this holds whether the item of information is a letter, a word, an entire chunk of meaning, or a discreet idea.

The consequences of these limitations of short and long term memory and of tunnel vision are critical in reading and learning to read. They may be examined in detail in the work of Smith (1971, 1973). One consequence is that it is probably extremely difficult to read with comprehension at a speed much slower than 200 words per minute (Smith, 1972). Fluent and effective reading requires the constant generation of hypotheses about meaning, in advance, with these hypotheses being tested and modified on the basis of a minimum of visual information. This means that readers must be encouraged to make 'intelligent guesses' rather than attempt to analyse every bit of visual information that is on the page and try to strain it through the constrained sieves of memory (Smith, 1972).

Implications for the Teaching of Reading

In this limited space it is possible to make only two general statements regarding the implications of the foregoing for the teaching of reading. First, because we still know so little about how children learn to read, it is futile to be dogmatic about the efficacy of any method of teaching reading. That teaching method A was employed and some, or even all, children learnt to read does not entitle anybody to assert a *causal* connection between method A and the fact that children did learn to read. What has been established, over and over again, is that *children learn to read by reading.* Given the first point, that children

learn to read by reading, the second follows from it. Reading should be made as easy as possible for children. Reading instruction should not be made a veritable obstacle course that obstructs children in their attempts to come to grips with the task of identifying the meaning potential in written language. Children should be confronted with an absolute minimum of coding drills and word identification exercises. Especially, they should be spared the futility of having to deal with words in isolation. When children are presented with words in sentences, the sentences must be 'loaded' with interest and meaning because *meaning* provides both the clues and the feed-back for the non-visual process of *prediction* that reading basically is. Children when they are corrected in their reading attempts, should be corrected on the basis of the quality of their meaning-getting rather thar. on the basis of individual words. Word-perfect reading aloud is not only unnecessary, it is something that very few accomplished, adult readers are able to achieve.

The Reading Teacher's Problem

The reading teacher has been led to believe that somewhere a magic method for the teaching of reading exists if only he could find the person who could impart the secret to him. The teacher is frequently criticized for a number of inadequacies and he is led to believe that he could improve his performance if only he could become familiar with up-to-date techniques and take advantage of modern materials and technology. The entire education of the teacher from teachers college through the constant barrage of advice, opinion, and commercial importuning, has convinced him that by following procedures laid down by some 'expert' he will become a better teacher. This is unfortunate because the single and essential prerequisite to the implementation of any method of teaching reading is an understanding by the teacher, of the reading process and the learning to read process. Children and teachers both need an opportunity to learn what is going on when they attempt to read.

Conclusion

It is through enlightenment that children learn best and it is through enlightenment that teachers teach best, by *understanding* the reading process. "Ignorance about the reading process is by far the greatest limitation on reading and learning to read" (Smith, 1972).

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VARIABLES IN THE READING PROCESS 5

P. Donald Giffen

What Is Reading?

If I were to ask each person attending this conference for his or her own definition of reading, I am certain there would be as many definitions as there are people present. However, from these definitions would emerge two distinct poles of emphasis which we might label the decoding pole and the semantic reconstruction pole. Two definitions of reading quoted by Latham (1968) which capture this polarization are:

> Reading involves nothing more than the correlation of a sound image with its corresponding visual image. (Bloomfield, 1961)

and

> Reading is the art of reconstructing from the printed page, the writer's ideas, feelings, moods, and sensory impressions. (Artley, 1961)

The truth of the matter, however, is that few people (except for a handful of fanatics) would fall completely into one camp or the other. In fact, most of us would believe that reading involves some form of decoding print in order to achieve a writer's meaning. In other words, working out sound-letter correspondences would seem to be at best only a half-way point, and some will question whether there is any step involving decoding to sound at all.

Goodman (1968) and Smith (1971) see no necessity for mature readers to go through such an intermediary step in moving from print to meaning; and their writings support the idea that the quicker a child does away with decoding processes and begins to superimpose his own language competence upon a minimal flux of visual information obtained from the printed page in order to obtain an approximation of correct meaning, the better a reader he will be.

For psycholinguists, reading is seen as a guessing game, but certainly not as a haphazard one. From the reader's language competence comes knowledge of syntax and word order, of redundancy, and of semantic features of words which make their occurrence possible or not possible in certain locations. Thus in the context of ideas dealt with, in a selection being read, a reader will be able to get meaning (or read) using only enough information from the printed page to do one or more of the following:

1. confirm a word already predicted in the reader's mind;
2. select a word from a list of possibilities whose semantic features fit the syntactic and contexual frame; and/or
3. construct a hypothetical sound representation of an unfamiliar word in order to scan aural vocabulary for correspondences which might give semantic information.

It would seem as though better, more mature readers do a great deal of numbers one and two — predicting and selecting from limited possibilities — and much less of three — painstakingly decoding to sound. This seems confirmed by the very speed at which mature readers can read. Poor or beginning readers, however, are much less capable of performing such acts of prediction, confirmation and selection. This lack of ability is partly due to their lesser syntactic fluency and their much smaller vocabulary or stock of semantic notions.

A further fact which seems crucial is that beginning readers, while often fairly fluent in oral language, simply have not had experience with the three processes above which I have suggested constitute the process of reading, at least at the literal level.

To say that reading is merely a process of working out sound-letter correspondence would seem to be a great oversimplification. But to say that we do not decode at all is also false. We must feed sufficient visual information into the brain to confirm predictions, select the appropriate choice, or stimulate the scan of aural vocabulary, a process which might involve scanning only structural parts of words as a first step. However, we cannot get any real meaning from the marks on the page. Meaning is only in the head of the reader, and is not simply a product of an additive process of the semantic notions of the words used in a sentence. Language competence, both receptive and productive, involves the capacity to use an almost infinite number of factors such as situation, mood, tone, phrasing, syntactic organization and so forth in order to create meaning or semantics.

Many linguists believe that the capacity for such competence is a part of being human. It certainly seems present across language boundaries, as people speaking all languages seem to develop precisely the same abilities: linguistic experience, a process of building up a semantic store of considerable scope, will give this capacity substance. Note that we must not equate the process of building up linguistic experience with learning vocabulary lists. Words do not take on meaning in isolation, and often take on only very limited meaning in sentence contexts. Usually, a situational context is required to give a term genuine meaning. Thus we find that older children, who have simply lived more, (even though their scores on standardized reading

tests are exactly the same as younger children), seem more linguistically sophisticated in the sense of getting depth of meaning. It is capacity plus experience which constitute a child's language competence at any one time. Thus a child's reading ability — his ability to recreate meaning from the printed page — is a product of his inherent capacity for language and his linguistic experience to date.

This is not to say that we cannot understand sentences which are not already in our experience. Nor, as Chomsky (1965) points out, does it mean that there is a finite limit to our ability to produce sentences, a limit which is, again, imposed by experience. What is meant by the above is that in producing sentences, we can express the meaning of our choice through combinations of situational or contextual factors and a wide range of possible syntactic and vocabulary choices. But we will never use a totally new word, nor will we deliberately choose a new or unusual syntactic structure. (Often the creator of a double entendre is the last person to realize what the joke is!)

In reading, a receptive act, we will often encounter new words and somewhat unfamiliar structures. If search procedures fail to produce meaning, we seem to create some sort of semantic place-holder for the unknown item. This place-holder is not null, but is an educated guess as to meaning based upon situation and context, and possibly upon some structural features of words appearing in the novel structure or in the new work. As we continue to read, we will tend to either confirm or deny our guess; and if the latter is the case, we may go back and try again. A repeated experience with a similar construction or word in a new context will bring about a similar process, but with less doubt as to the accuracy of our guess. Thus while we can usually read an unfamiliar word or construction, as Chomsky suggests, the process of giving meaning to a new item is not absolute, and always has some element of approximation. Indeed, because of the very nature of language, which incorporates functional and semantic shifts, this process of semantic approximation (which is subject to confirmation from context) is always present to some degree, even when dealing with familiar items or constructions.

In the light of the above, reading can be seen as being in the words of Goodman (1967), a highly sophisticated psycholinguistic guessing game. However, it is far from being a process of blind groping for meaning in a semantic grab-bag. A psycholinguistic definition might be as follows:

> Reading is a process in which a reader uses minimal visual information to attribute meaning to printed material, such meaning being a product of the reader's semantic store of notions, his syntactic fluency,

the context of the printed display, and the features of that display attended to.

In normal circumstances, we would regard reading as being a form of communication between writer and reader, with the degree of correlation between messages sent and received being dependent upon the commonality of experiences of the sender and receiver with relationship to the words and structures of the written passage. Consequently, reading almost never results in exact communication of a message, simply because of the different worlds of experience which the writer and the reader bring to the situation.

While I have taken some time to discuss the nature of reading, I cannot help but feel that such a discussion is essential to the following examination of variables in the reading process, because of the shift in emphasis which results from the preceding definition. If reading is a meaning-getting process, and not just a process of decoding, and if it is the reader who makes meaning under the influence of printed visual stimuli, then our attention must first be directed toward the reader, and also toward the ways in which he develops his meaning-making repertoire. The most important variable in the reading process must be the reader himself.

Variables in Reading

The reader's physiological condition is the first variable we shall consider in looking at the reader. A person who is ill, or undernourished, or overtired is not going to show much interest or motivation for reading. But beyond such general factors, the two key physiological factors bearing upon reading are vision and hearing. While many teachers and parents realize that visual problems will make reading difficult or impossible, they do not seem aware of the problems which a loss of hearing can create. Often a loss of hearing can affect only sound within a certain pitch. If this loss is in the range where normal speech occurs, the child will be deprived of a great deal of linguistic experience, and this cannot help but be a limiting factor. Estimates are that between five and ten per cent of children will suffer some degree of hearing loss sufficient to cause some such deprivation (Harris, 1970). The vast majority of school students never have their hearing accurately checked using an audiometer.

The number of children who will suffer sufficient visual difficulties to have an effect upon their reading ability has been estimated to be as high as twenty per cent (Harris, 1970). While schools usually check vision using a Snellen wall chart or similar device, they do not examine children for problems with lateral and vertical posture of the eyes, depth perception, colour blindness and fusion weaknesses.

Indeed, a child who is near-sighted may be able to read quite well, while a far-sighted child who can do well on a wall chart may be severely handicapped. Only an examination using a telebinocular device can detect many of these problems, and such devices are far too few.

The effect of visual problems may be a great dislike for reading on the part of the child; and when he does read, he will not be able to perceive printed symbols accurately enough to discriminate one from another. Consequently, problems with visual perception interfere at the very important first step of the reading process.

Another often overlooked factor is that the poorer the reader, or the less developed the reader's ability to predict what is to follow, the more information he needs from the page. Poor or beginning readers, therefore, will suffer most from any visual problems which exist. A further fact which is often overlooked is that visual immaturity, which usually results in children being far sighted, can be present when children first enter school. Attempts to get children having this condition to read can only result in frustration for both teacher and pupil, and can result in the child's developing a dislike for the entire idea of reading.

Certainly, children vary in their reasoning ability; and while the concept of I.Q. has undergone much discussion lately from some quarters, there can be no doubt that the child scoring below a certain level on a well-administered individual I.Q. test will have difficulty in becoming a good reader. That is, such a child's reading performance will certainly lag behind his peer group to the point where he will be identified as a remedial student. Harris (1970) and Wilson (1972) both point out that such a tag is only for convenience of teachers and administrators, and that the grade five child who is reading at a grade four level simply needs to have his reading program adjusted. The variable which a lack of intelligence introduces for the child is that the child may be saddled with reading tasks appropriate to his chronological age, but much too difficult for his mental development. The implication is that teachers should pay much more attention to a child's reading expectancy or reading potential.

Because reading is largely a mental activity which takes place within that mysterious black box called the brain, it has proven very difficult for researchers to pin down specific intellectual factors which might be identified as variables in the reading process. Spache (1963) found agreement on three factors which seem to occur in most studies: vocabulary, verbal reasoning ability (both inductive and deductive), and skill in perceiving relationships among ideas. In other words, the important factors are:

1. a stock of ideas or semantic notions, and
2. the ability to manipulate those notions, and see relationships.

As is discussed below, both of these factors would seem to be subject to growth by means of experience, either natural or induced in learning situations.

Smith (1960) and Guilford (1960) also examined the mental processes of reading. Their lists include: cognition or recognition of symbols, memory, inductive and deductive reasoning, and evaluation or performing critical judgements. This latter factor represents ability with higher mental processes, and certainly is highly variable. There also seems to be considerable developmental variation as to when children can perform acts of inductive and deductive reasoning. By comparison, acts of cognition (or recognition) and memory are relatively simple, and can be performed by most children, and it is relatively easy for teachers to evaluate whether the child has been correct. While I seem to be somewhat pre-empting a portion of this paper dealing with the teaching variable, it must be noted that it is the nature of children (and the fact of their individual differences) which creates most of the other variables that will be discussed. In this case, the difficulty of meeting the needs of groups of children with respect to higher reasoning ability produces variables in grouping, materials and teaching approaches.

While discussing the findings of Smith and Guilford, the memory variable should be examined as well. Harris (1970) and Kirk and McCarthy (1968) differentiate between visual and auditory memory, and both caution that perceptual problems can often contribute to or cause apparent problems in these areas. However, it appears as though certain children, even when no perceptual problem is present, simply do not retain visual and/or auditory impressions. The effect of such a variable can be catastrophic, as the child will have great difficulty in learning any sight vocabulary at all, and will tend to forget the beginning of a sentence before he reaches the end. Such a difficulty makes it virtually impossible for the child to read for meaning.

Problems with long-term memory do not seem to have the same effect upon recognition as the above short-term memory difficulties; however, the child is bound to have problems with higher comprehension tasks, as he finds difficulty in bringing his previous experience to bear. If, as seems apparent, we tend to work out many sound-letter correspondences for ourselves by analogy, long-term memory problems could seriously inhibit such processes as well.

The most important variable in the reading process must be the linguistic background which the child brings to the situation. This

statement is underlined by studies such as the massive one conducted by Coleman (1966) and others in and around New York. Coleman sought to identify factors which account for great differences in educational attainment of children attending schools in social settings varying from affluent suburbs to ghetto slums. Much to their surprise the researchers found the differences between the schools themselves to be rather minimal, except at the extremes. Coleman concluded that whatever the cause of these differences might be, it would likely be found outside the schools (i.e. in the homes of the children concerned).

A comparison of homes of widely-differing economic status usually reveals one fact: the child in the poorer home is relatively linguistically deprived; there are few books and magazines present, and none of appropriate reading level; parents seldom read themselves, never read to the child, and often look upon reading as inappropriate behaviour; the level of conversation tends toward bare communication, and vocabulary is limited and repetitive. While some of these factors may change somewhat in the home where the native language is not the school language, there will still be linguistic deprivation in the school language, and additional problems of interference, both in vocabulary items and in syntax.

While differences in the quantity of linguistic experience available to the child in different home situations will be evident, even more striking are the qualitative differences. Writing about the child's vocabulary development, Spache (1963, p. 431) says:

> If he is limited in verbal intelligence or in experiences with words because of bilingualism, poor family or cultural background, narrow preschool verbal experiences, and the like, the child will lack an auditory background for acquiring an adequate sight or meaning vocabulary. The intellectual interests of the family and the level of its verbal intercommunication also condition the child's readiness for reading vocabulary growth. Throughout the elementary years the pupil's play and reading interests, hobbies, and pastimes influence his vocabulary development.

In summary then, the child and the child's linguistic capabilities and previous experience are the major variables in the act of reading. Provided that the child can perceive print upon the page, the amount of meaning derived from reading is dependent upon meaning already present in the mind of the child, together with syntactic fluency, which contributes greatly to semantics in a language such as English. Of course, an additional factor is the ability of the individual child to manipulate elements creatively to generalize, to hypothesize, and to learn by analogy. Being a good guesser can help a child to be a good reader. Unfortunately, one of the basic tenets of many teachers of

reading is that we must demand exactness, and discourage guessing.

When discussing variables in reading, materials certainly must be considered. The child may encounter a vast variety of materials in the school setting, from controlled-vocabulary readers to graded-difficulty short selections (with questions to follow) to pupil-dictated experience stories, to trade books from the classroom or school library. In addition, there could be various skill-building and vocabulary-building games. Very few classrooms today are limited to a single graded reader. Most classrooms also have access to skill-building workbooks or series of worksheets which teachers use to reinforce word-identification skills.

The number of variables which are introduced are infinite, especially when various combinations of materials are considered. For example, some readers are based upon strictly controlled vocabulary principles, with planned repetition of new words. Others seek to minimize problems with sound-letter correspondence (the so-called linguistic readers). Other factors which enter are the degree of control exercised upon syntactic complexity of sentences used, and control of concept difficulty. Many series of books try to meet hypothetical interests of children of a certain age ("Grade one children are interested in themselves, their families, and animals.") Even illustrations are controlled according to principles of fading out picture clues as children get older.

Most of the theory behind the preparation of reading materials for children is developmental: as children grow older, their vocabulary grows, their ability to understand more complex sentences and concepts increases, and their interests turn outward from themselves. These generalizations hold for average children, but it is disheartening to most teachers to find how few average children there are in the schools. I am reminded of the statistician who drowned while wading across a river, the average depth of which was only three feet. It seems that the problem lies, not in the materials themselves, but in fitting materials to children.

One of the interesting phenomena in the field of teaching reading is the fact that, no matter what materials are used in the schools, quite a large proportion of children do learn to read. In study after study, researchers have tried to prove one method or set of materials to be better than others. To date, no one set of materials has proven best, nor has any one method shown itself to be conclusively superior. Studies such as that of Chall (1967) indicate small differences, but one wonders how these differences have been measured. Can a method which concentrates on decoding as opposed to reading for meaning produce better readers? How can we define a better reader?

If tests include items of phonics, or sounding out words, then the test will be biased. Further, is it correct to perform tests at any one set time, or should tests be continued longitudinally for a period of five or ten years in order to pin down, not only reading ability, but also attitude toward reading?

It is quite possible that some methods of teaching reading may make the entire process so distasteful that, while children can read, they avoid the experience. Consequently, the methods used in the teaching of reading can be critical.

The definition which the teacher has in mind of reading (if she has one at all!) will to a large extent determine the method she uses. If she doesn't have any particular views, she will simply adopt that of the teacher's guide of the materials at hand. Often, such guides are what has been termed eclectic, or 'all things to all people'. The approach is that commonly known as 'the shotgun', with controlled vocabulary and syntax, phonics and structural analysis, and with experience stories and ora games used as supplementary activities. Of course, the teacher is expected to be selective from this wealth of suggestions, but one wonders how many selections are made on good educational grounds, and how many are simply reflections of lack of time, knowledge or resources.

What many beginning teachers lack in knowledge is often made up to some extent by experience over a period of years, and often such materials can be used well later as the teacher becomes familiar with what will and what won't work. But pity the children who have to suffer through the first few years.

Even though they may claim to use a pure method of one kind or another, few teachers can stick exclusively to a phonics or look-say approach. In the first case, many common words do not yield to phonics analysis; in the second, once the child knows *big*, it is much easier to use a 'family phonics' approach to teach *pig*, *dig*, and *fig*. However, a number of teachers do make every effort to use one method over the other, if given a choice on any one 'target word'. Such variations in approach can be most confusing to a child if he encounters the phonics fiend in Grade Two, and the look-say lover in Grade Three. The ideal, of course, would be for the teacher to have sufficient knowledge of the child and the reading problem at hand to know what approach is appropriate to the moment. This is just one facet of the teacher variable.

The task of the teacher of reading is, simply, to produce readers; children who can read at their developmental level, and equally important, children who do read. The amount of knowledge which the teacher has about the reading process, methods, materials and

children will be wasted if, in the end, the children in her class do not turn to books for information and enjoyment. It is entirely possible for a teacher to turn the reading period into a skill-building inquisition or a word identification marathon lasting ten months of the year. I wonder how many times a year a child is kept in after school because the teacher caught him reading a book during phonics exercises.

The tasks of the teacher of reading are many: teaching word-identification and vocabulary; adjusting materials to suit individual needs; meeting a vast variety of student interests; detecting particular weaknesses and arranging appropriate learning experiences; and so forth almost ad infinitum. But the most important task of all is to see to it that children have happy experiences with books and reading. She must seek out and create interest; she must motivate children to read, and then reinforce their successes. Teachers can easily motivate children to read; the easiest way is to read to them, and to share with them her own enthusiasm for the wonderful world of books.

Reinforcement is a bit trickier, however. The best reinforcement is to ensure the child of success in reading by careful adjustment of material and instruction. Very few teachers consciously reinforce children with praise or rewards. Indeed, the chart on the wall where every child can record his progress, or the number of books he has read may be reinforcing to the good readers, but can have a very negative effect upon the poor readers. But there are other reinforcing devices; let children share what they have read with others; a personal progress chart, on which the child tries to better his own previous effort.

How well the teacher makes use of the interest of children, and how well she motivates and reinforces their efforts constitutes an enormous variable in most classrooms. Indeed, if one fact emerges from the research on success and failure in children's learning to read, it is that no matter what materials or methods are used, an effective teacher will produce readers — that is, children who can and do read.

One final variable which should be considered is the influence of the child's family and peer group upon his attitude toward reading and books. Often these two influences are working in opposite directions: the family encourages the child to read, and provides reading material, while the peer group may even make fun of bookworms, and will hold alternate activities such as games to be of more value. It appears that the peer group influence grows stronger as the child grows older; so that if the child gets off to a bad start in reading, and nothing is done to remedy the situation, factors such as peer group influence will tend to snowball attitudes of dislike for books and

reading which the child is bound to develop.

The cliche of "misery loves company" seems to be present in most classrooms; it is comforting to have peers who suffer the same weaknesses as yourself. In this sense, the practice of so-called homogeneous grouping can possibly contribute negatively toward improvement in areas of weakness such as reading. Children tend to model their behaviour after people whom they admire, or people whom they identify as being successful. Homogeneous grouping removes models of successful reading behaviour from the poorer reader's peer group. Consequently, teachers who group students with similar difficulties for instructional periods — and this seems one of the few practical ways of dealing with large class loads — must be careful that a negative dynamic or attitude toward reading does not build up within the group. She must also make conscious efforts to motivate children within the group toward success, and then reinforce that success. In this way, models of success will once again be available to the child.

This same concept of modelling also describes the effect which the child's family can have upon his reading habits. Homes in which parents read frequently and with pleasure produce children who have a good attitude toward reading, and such children seldom become hampered in school because of reading difficulties.

Conclusion

I began by trying to define reading, and concluded that discussion by saying that, as it is the reader who is the meaning-maker, then we must place the reader at the centre of our efforts to teach reading. I suppose this is one reflection of the present-day emphasis upon child-centred education. However, in another sense, (a completely cold, scientific — psycholinguistic, if you like — sense), this approach is entirely logical and supportable in terms of what actually happens during an act of reading. Researchers into reading have followed the classic experimental model: they have manipulated variables of different kinds, and have produced a lot of results and conclusions over a number of decades, results which can largely be summed up by saying that we don't know for sure how children learn to read. Apparently, sometimes they learn to read despite what we do. But the problem in many of these experiments has been that we have chosen to manipulate variables which actually contribute very little to an individual act of reading. We have altered materials, monkeyed with methods, and experimented with groups and timing. But if the psycholinguistic model of what happens during reading is an accurate one, few of these variables contribute very much to any one individual act of reading. Remember that the reader uses minimal information

from a visual display, and then draws upon his experience and language competence to produce what may be a completely unique understanding about what he has 'read'.

In order to produce better readers, the variables we should be concerning ourselves with are those at the heart of the process: we should be striving to enrich the experiences of all children, and to teach them the magic words which give them verbal command of those experiences. We should also be teaching them to manipulate the ideas expressed in words, so as to be able to use processes of logic and to think creatively.

Especially in the field of reading, teachers of the past have tended to ask the question, "Is it right?" This makes grading and correcting easy. But if a child makes no mistakes in an exercise, can the teacher truthfully say that the child learned anything during the course of the lesson? A far more fruitful field of research into variables in reading is that suggested by Goodman (1969), a careful analysis of the types of mistakes which children make when they read. For example, comparing two children who have made mistakes reading the sentence, "In the barn, Tony saw a brown horse,": one child reads, "In the barn, Tony was a brown horse," while the other reads, "In the barn, Tony saw a brown pony." An analysis of these error patterns tells the researcher a considerable amount about the mental processes of these two children, both of whom are "reading", but with different degrees of success.

Language is the most human of attributes. It is also our most powerful tool. In striving to help children to read and deal with language more effectively, teachers perform an act worthy of their best efforts. Reading is the process whereby, at least to the present day, we have had access to much of the knowledge of our civilization. Consequently, it is a topic worthy of study.

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APPROACHES FOR CHILDREN WITH READING DIFFICULTIES

6

Peter S. Westwood

Teachers are quick to point out the immense gap which exists between theory and practice. They rightly comment that methodology frequently appears as the poor relation, or the 'twilight zone', within conferences which deal with the teaching of reading. Thus, I intend in this paper to focus on reading in an essentially practical way.

We are concerned in this session with children who are experiencing some degree of difficulty in learning to read. It has been said that there is no one method, medium, approach or philosophy, that holds the key to the process of learning to read. From this it follows that the greater the range and variety of methods known to any teacher, the more likely it is that he will feel competent to provide appropriate help for the slow learning or the child with specific difficulties.

Before presenting and evaluating some lesser known methods which may appeal to you for use in the classroom I must select four characteristic needs of children with reading difficulties. Elsewhere (Westwood, 1975) I have given a much longer list, but these four points will suffice to support the use of the methods and media to be considered here.

1. *The need to regain lost interest and motivation.* Because of previous experience of failure, many less able children have been turned off, have lost interest, and can scarcely be described as highly motivated. There is a need to provide a new slant, even perhaps a gimmick, to regain and hold interest.
2. *The need to grade very carefully the steps of instruction and the material to be used.* It is true to say that many of the reading schemes in use in our schools, while being very suitable for children who make normal progress, are too steeply graded for children with problems. The teacher has to be able to supplement existing schemes by providing additional games, activities, and experiences for those who need them at each stage. This point links directly with the next.
3. *The need to utilize methods which allow for repetition and overlearning to the point of mastery.* Children with reading problems

need longer exposure to each unit of instruction, with frequent revision, repetition and over-learning. Such repetition must be achieved without loss of interest.

4. *The need to utilize attention-holding methods which involve all channels of input.* These are the approaches we usually refer to as 'multisensory' (Lerner, 1971). If the child is fully and actively involved in the learning situation, he is more likely to assimilate and retain what we are attempting to teach.

So, having highlighted these needs, what approaches are available? Let us begin with the younger age group, junior primary, and refer first to the *Pictogram Method* (Wendon, 1972). This is a fascinating approach developed by a very imaginative teacher. No doubt we have all tried various tricks to help a child to associate and remember a sound with a printed symbol. Wendon has out done the best of us! Rigby (1973), in reviewing the material has said, "The system does make the acquisition of an essential skill immensely enjoyable so that the learning of phonics is no longer like medicine, —good for you but tasting nasty. It is a pleasurable activity shared by teacher and children so that those who have met Harry, the Hairy Hatman and his friends and enemies rarely forget them, or their sounds" (p. 26).

The pictograms themselves, some of which are illustrated here are letters with pictures superimposed in such a way that they reinforce the shape of the letter while creating a *story link* in the child's mind. The *h* is presented as the *H*airy *H*atman who walks along in words whispering *h,h,h* for *hh*airy *hh*at. The *w* is introduced as the *W*icked *W*ater *W*itch, with her two pools of water held within the letter. More difficult combinations are all covered in the scheme, e.g. when *a* (for apple) is next to *W* (for Water Witch) the witch casts a spell which makes the apple taste *aw*ful.

Those of you who wish to know more about the materials could write to Lynn Wendon at 33 New Road, Barton, Cambridge, England. Two sets comprising the complete Pictogram System can be purchased. But, of course, you may like to experiment with the idea and create characters of your own.

Still remaining with the younger age group ostensibly, but considering now an approach which also has application with older children with decoding problems, we come to *Reading by Rainbow.* This simple colour code system was devised *by* teachers (a husband and wife) *for* teachers. Its great advantage over other colour coding approaches is its simplicity. Only four colours are used: letters in *black* give their common phonetic sound; *red* letters give their name; *blue* is used to represent the long oo sound, as in 'too' (and to dis-

FIGURE 1

THE PICTOGRAM METHOD (Wendon, 1972)

tinguish *b* from *d*; *yellow* is used to represent letters which do not produce a sound within a word. Wood (1969) has also experimented with colour coding for remedial reading.

He uses blue to act as a sign of irregularity, e.g. the letter *o* in *'come'*, which does not give its sound or its name.

Those who wish to find out more about *Reading by Rainbow* or purchase a set of the six books, worksheets, reference cards and teachers notes, could write to Moor Platt Press, 294 Chorley New Road, Horwich, Lancs, England.

Under the heading *multisensory approaches* we would include methods which, for example, involve the child in finger-tracing over a letter or word many times while it is articulated clearly and correctly. Finally the child writes the letter or word from memory. Such methods have been advocated for many years for helping children with specific reading disability (Monroe, 1932. Fernald, 1946), and have attained respectability through the work of June Orton (1966) and Gill Cotterell (1970). Also referred to as V-A-K (visual-auditory-kinaesthetic) and V-A-K-T (with textured letters for tactile sensation) the approach seems particularly useful with children who have problems in integrating what they *see* with what they *hear*. Their problem may have a neurological basis, or may be one symptom of failure to attend carefully to a learning task. Whatever the reason, this teaching approach which brings vision, hearing, articulation and movement into play does appear to result in improved assimilation and retention. It is obviously easier to apply this approach with young children; but in a one-to-one remedial teaching situation it is still a viable proposition. I have found the finger-tracing method very useful for helping a child to overcome a reversal tendency in reading and writing.

The Language-Experience Approach, or 'organic reading', if used in a highly structured way, is an excellent remedial approach. I have found it more useful than any other single method for starting the non-literate individual of any age on the road to reading.

Basically the approach uses the child's own language patterns to produce carefully controlled amounts of reading material. Perhaps the theme will be dealing with a special interest or hobby. The material thus produced then provides the units which are repeated, revised, over-learned, and dissected to ensure that the words that have been written can be read both in and out of context.

From these examples it is seen that the approach can be extended far beyond the whole word, 'look and say' level. Phonic sight habits and word attack skills can be developed from the words already known by sight. The scheme known as *Breakthrough to Literacy* (Mackay, Thompson, & Schaub, 1970) lends itself to the same kind

of uses in remedial reading groups.

I recommend the books by Lee & Van Allen (1963), Stauffer (1970) and Hall (1970) which all describe the language experience approach in detail and with particular reference to its use in the ordinary classroom. Its more specific use as a remedial method is covered in the books by Walker (1974) and Westwood (1975).

Of the approaches which use *audio-visual presentation* there is the fairly recent material produced by Radlauer (1974). I am referring to the *Bowmar Reading Incentive Program.* This presents reasonably sophisticated themes like Drag Racing, Motor cycles, Hot Air Balloons, etc., through the use of film strip, sound commentary on tape and a student's 'reading book' which embodies the same language as presented in the taped commentary. The range of kits in the *Bowmar Program* each have a teacher's guide and sets of the students' books. The very colourful and lively presentation, and the opportunity for the student to become familiar with the language structure and vocabulary associated with each theme *before* having to read it in the books, are the principal attractions. The use of the taped commentary in conjunction with the books then allows for abundant repetition and over-learning. The programme has proved extremely successful with retarded readers at high school level.

Teachers can, of course, make their own programmes for use with the tape recorder. Indeed this item of hardware is now an indispensable aid in all remedial reading situations. It may be used for nothing more ambitious than the pre-recording of popular stories which the children can listen to through head-sets while following in the book. In this way material which would otherwise be at frustration level for a child can be presented in a very meaningful manner. Other uses of the tape may be to programme aspects of phonic work or spelling assignments, or to set comprehension questions at literal, interpretive, critical, and creative levels.

The use of popular songs to provide repetition with enjoyment has also been noted as valuable for remedial purposes (Chapman, 1972). An example of this is shown here, where a zig-zag book containing the words from the recent song about Muhammad Ali is used by the child. He follows the words in the book as the song and music are played from the cassette. Later the important words are revised on flashcards out of the book context. The amount of repetition of specific words and phrases in popular songs would probably surprise you if you took the trouble to count them. For example the song *Stand by me* by John Lennon repeats the phrase 'stand by me' twenty-three times in one run through! Surely it is good sense to capitalize on such readily available and very acceptable repetition.

The Overhead Projector has become popular for presenting aspects of reading in a new way. Many teachers make their own transparencies and use colour to good advantage in developing word study skills in children. The Milliken Publishing Company has produced an excellent series *Look, Listen and Learn* (Sullivan & Williams: 1972). The material comprises attractive O.H.P. transparencies and a parallel set of spirit duplicating master-sheets to allow for the printing of assignments for individual children. The quality of this material is extremely good, and probably surpasses anything which a teacher could produce.

One final point on the audio side. The Languagemaster still remains a very valuable machine for use in remedial settings. Again, its main value lies in the fact that the child is actively engaged in the operation of the machine, and is using visual, vocal, and auditory channels simultaneously; and is receiving immediate positive feedback.

Finally, I want to refer to just one reading scheme which I think is of very great value in remedial classes at top primary and lower to middle secondary levels: *Story Path to Reading.* Perhaps I feel a particular affection for this series because it was the first one I ever used for remedial work in secondary schools some fifteen years ago. At that time it was published by Blackie in England, but now a very much more attractive edition with significant improvements is available from Peter Leyden Publishing House Pty. Ltd., Elizabeth Street, Artarmon, N.S.W. 2064. *Story Path to Reading* (Leyden, 1970), also referred to as the 'Breakthrough to reading' scheme, is based on a whole word, look and say approach. There are twelve reading books in the scheme, each with an Activity Resource Kit, and two sets of Word Guides to accompany the first six books. The careful control of the vocabulary load and the sentence length are achieved without creating stilted language in the early books. Book 1 uses only 200 words and from that point onwards every new book repeats the words used in the previous books and introduces 50 new ones. The whole scheme is thus based on a core vocabulary of 750 words. The Resource Kits are colourful, and the puzzles, exercises and games contained in them really do hold the interest of the children.

So, I have examined briefly several approaches to remedial reading which go a long way to meeting the needs noted at the beginning of this paper. It only remains for me to remind you that any method or material is only as good as the teacher in whose hands it is placed. Without the vital ingredients of optimism and enthusiasm on the teacher's part these approaches will achieve little.

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IMPLICATIONS FOR THE AQUISITION OF LITERACY 7

Constance M. McCullough

In Chapter 2 is Donald Moyle's excellent presentation of *The Bullock Report*. When I first learned of a Bullock Committee, I was a bit misled by the title. What was a bullock committee doing in England? on language? In India a dozen years ago I wrote a little story entitled *The Bullock*, in praise of that amazing animal's contribution to life in India. There are only minor differences between the two publications. Theirs is 600 pages long, has been heralded all over the English-speaking world, and will probably make a great impact on publishers, educators, and politicians everywhere. Mine is buried in a fourth reader and will be read by only a few million children. Theirs cost five English pounds. Mine cost two rupees, fifty paise. If they will send me a copy of their report, I shall gladly send them one of mine.

Instead, I have been forced to borrow a neighbour's copy, and I must say it is praiseworthy in many ways — circumspect, wise, and beautifully written. It is humbling to see that they were able to formulate in a few months what it has taken me forty years of professional life to appreciate. As a cheer leader would say, "Bully for them!"

I should like to think that the millennium has now arrived. But even with this admirable document, I still am convinced that we can deal with it badly, too. We suffer the fate of the buyer who buys a suit of clothes with buttons guaranteed not to fall off. They don't have a chance. The cloth falls apart first.

Logical answers to problems in this year may well be recognized twenty years from now as overcompensation which, in its own way, cultivates other problems. We centre our attention on current practices and controversies instead of expanding our conception of what reading is. We tend to pay attention to well-advertised research and miss some very important studies which have no current commercial tie. This is not criticism of this exemplary report. It is merely a comment on our continuing condition.

An eminent psychologist and computer scientist, Professor H. A. Simon of Carnegie-Mellon University, has said, "We do not know . . . that learning to read is in fact any harder for the child than learning

to speak. We only know that the former gives the surrounding adults more trouble . . ."

Perhaps the second sentence should be altered to read, "We only know that learning to read gives the child more trouble with the surrounding adults." There is mounting evidence in the research of the past hundred years that the features we stress in teaching children to read are not only insufficient to prevent failure and mediocrity, but so distort the child's view of the reading process and of exactly what he must do, as to generate mediocrity and failure.

Let us consider these relationships: Our adult conceptions of the reading process shape instruction; the nature of the instruction influences the child's conception of the reading task; and the child's conception of the task shapes his behaviour. Even though the instruction is perfectly suited to the individual child, a goal which overshadows all else at the present time, it may not be perfectly suited to the nature of the reading process or communicative to the child of what he must do to engage in it fully. It is true that research has not yet revealed a complete description of the reading process, so that at best our conceptions of reading are partial. But we are not successfully conveying the implications of existing research to the child.

One of these days, Nature is going to say, "Look. Man has been making meaningful notations for at least 300,000 years, and you still haven't come up with a fool-proof way of reading. Xerox wouldn't put up with such a rate of progress in its research department, so why should I?" To paraphrase the Koala's Qantas ad, if we don't shape up, Nature will ship us out and start upgrading the dolphin.

Most of what goes on in the world today in the name of reading instruction is the result of pre-scientific insights over thousands of years. To call them pre-scientific is not to discredit them, for all contained some bit of truth or justification. They were reasonable conclusions from insufficient knowledge of physiology, psychology, and linguistics, administered from the point of view of the adult who was more or less a reader, instead of that of the child or youth approaching the unknown and uncategorized. Hence the mess in which we find ourselves.

Let us go back to the dawn of notation and imagine how it must have been before the invention of the Seiko watch. In this account I lean heavily on Marshack's recent study, *The Roots of Civilization*, and take it from the point of view of woman's liberation.

There was Man, disconsolately fingering his all-purpose stone because he was down on his luck — doing such things as trying to fish through two feet of ice, trying to pick fruit in the off-season, expecting herds to calve when they weren't expecting, and so on.

Since he was the one with the all-purpose stone, and his wife could become one of the purposes, she had to do something quickly without offending him.

"How about counting the days?"

"Ugh! What good would that do? They're all alike."

"Well,then, how about counting the nights — the way the moon changes all the time?"

"Ugh! What good would that do? Last time I made marks on sand, they all washed out."

"You're so big and strong and wonderful. Why don't you cut the shape of the moon in the stone each night? Pretty soon we'd know when what happened."

She knew enough not to nag *then*. She just kept nagging later.

"Have you made your mark of the full moon tonight?"

The wife who nagged a lot got her husband to mark as much as a thirteen month calendar in a little border around the edge of the stone. Having no television, he had to listen to such remarks as:

"Where are we on your stone tonight? I feel a nip in the air."

Or, "The ice is beginning to melt now."

Or, "The grass is bending over with heavy seeds. I wonder how soon I can grind them between the stones."

By drawing attention to changes, seeing likenesses and differences, sensing the sequence of events and matching the sequence to the calendar on the stone, gradually deriving a relationship of cause and effect, an effect evolving into another cause for a still later effect, she taught her husband to bring experience and cognition to the calendar and thus to read it. The interesting thing about this first case of a reluctant reader is that he learned even though his teacher was a woman. It was a matter of life or death for them both.

When it came to teaching the calendar to the less-highly motivated children, fortunately small and weak and without all-purpose stones, mothers invented other instructional techniques. Some mothers spent weeks teaching their children to recite the names of the shapes of the moon for the whole sequence of a thirteen month year, without looking at the stone. Others said, "Don't say fingernail fingernail fingernail halfnail halfnail halfnail wholenail wholenail wholenail, and so on. Use the proper words: crescent crescent crescent, etc." Still others said, "Why bother with all that repetition? Just teach the names of the seven shapes. Draw them in the sand and have the children draw them from memory."

Well, you can imagine how it was. Children became confused about which side meant waxing and which side meant waning. Mothers finally had to say, "Think! No moon, new moon on the right,

half moon on the right, gibbous moon on the right, full moon, gibbous moon on the left, half moon on the left, waning moon on the left, no moon again." But which was left and which was right? Sometimes it was a year of reciting and drawing before they were allowed a peek at the real stone, or allowed to stay up to see the source of all their problems. Many a slow learner wanted to drop out of cave, but it was too long a drop.

Fathers became disgusted because their children didn't know what to do with the information, even when they named everything correctly. Some said to their wives, "Look. You stay in the cave and *I'll* take the children out in the *field* where they can *see* what that calendar means."

The situation was no better when one adult was chosen to teach all the children around. "If all they're going to do is learn one kind of moon at a time, I can make better use of them at cave. Besides, it's all mooningless to them."

And so, with logical ways of slicing up the learning, magnifying the ritual of it and cutting out its purpose, — all plausible from an adult's eye view, meaning was divorced from symbol, and the cognitive processes of sensing the sequence and its meaning, and interpreting it with regard to changes in the environment were postponed until later. Motivation was at low ebb. By the time "later" arrived, children were well-indoctrinated to say but not understand. Their conception of their job as readers had never been fully developed. Vestiges of this kind of thinking remain with us today.

So Man, or Woman, depending on your politics, had invented not only a way to live with Time, but several ways of making it difficult to read and of inducing great differences among children.

For many years now I have put my trust in balanced reading development. The theory is that reading is a very complex task, that many factors contribute to its successful production, and that if these are taught simultaneously in congenial relationships to one another and properly proportioned in emphasis, struggle can be minimal, motivation can be high, and wholesome reading development can proceed. I still believe this, but I now know that some elements essential to balance are still missing — partly because we take them for granted, partly because while research has drawn attention to them we have not heeded it, and partly because we need further research in the operation of reading itself.

We have vivisected, categorized and boxed and recorded phonics systems, vocabulary skills, study skills, comprehension exercises, speed exercises. No one can say we haven't worked hard and long. We have urged children to read widely and deeply, to inform them-

selves and enjoy, and to read for varied purposes. We have arranged the classroom so that they have to bump into good books as they enter. But we still have to make known to them the behaviours of a skilful reader, his motives and his satisfactions. The skilful reader arrives. I still believe that the reader labelled mediocre and poor can arrive too, if ever we push the right buttons, in his head, not in a machine.

Those famous first grade studies which Donald Moyle mentioned in the June 1975 issue of *Reading*, the United Kingdom Reading Association's journal, showed, after thousands of dollars of U.S. Government grants, that teachers made more difference than methods or materials. Whatever some teachers used, the results were excellent. This finding is generating much research activity to find out what the excellent teacher does. I shudder to think how many studies will stop with friendliness, firmness, businesslike manner, a sense of humor, and "She takes times to sit with each pupil." I hope not, but just to be on the safe side, I'm shuddering. It will take a lot of insight on the part of the observer to realize the significance of the things the teacher says and does that make the difference. But this is what is needed. I suspect that the excellent teacher has her own private insights about reading which she scarcely recognizes in herself and which she uses to push the right buttons in the child's head.

Many people interpreted the first grade studies as meaning that, since no one method was outstanding, each teacher should put together an assortment of methods and materials, and orchestrate her own production. As some of it has turned out, it isn't so good as Monday's hash. Even mixtures of competitive methods and materials aren't going to make perfection.

The crowning blow to our complacency, if we have any left, is the discovery in Thorndike's *Reading Comprehension Education in Fifteen Countries* that many children around the world scored no better than they might have by chance. Since comprehension should be our primary goal, it is interesting to see that the children in this survey did better in vocabulary than they did in comprehension. We can think that it is easier to know the meaning of a word than to grasp the meaning of a passage, but from my observation, in general we tend to *teach* vocabulary while we tend to *expect* comprehension

If we need to be further devastated, we should consider Marie Clay's New Zealand study of children's understanding of the vocabulary the teacher uses in reading instruction, after the children have been listening to her for a year. Many children do not know the meaning of *word, letter, sentence, beginning* of a word, *beginning* sound, *end* of the sentence, and so forth. In her manual of suggestions

for reteaching these meanings we can find much to be applied at the first of the year before all the damage is done.

Motivation has a very special meaning for readers. When the reader fixates on an area of a printed page, he can actually see in an oval about two inches wide and one inch high the letters on three lines. Unless he knows that he can get meaning only by looking from left to right on one line, there is no reason for him to look at just that one line. (As someone has remarked, "Primitive man never recognized a tiger by looking at just one lion.") Geyer and Kolers in 1974 observed that the eye is not like a camera. It is a processor of information, governed largely by what the reader expects to see and what he wishes to do. Unless the reader learns to establish purposes for his reading, unless he realizes that reading is for finding out — a cognitive process — unless he creates for himself expectations of what the author is going to do, how the sentence is going to end, what the next step in the sequence may be, he may even have trouble staying on one line. Using a marker subtracts only one half of his problem.

Many of us have had the experience of asking a child to identify a word, only to have him stare at it with increasing bewilderment and embarrassment. The longer he stares, the more time is wasted, until finally someone rescues him with the answer. The simple physiological fact is that if he is really staring, the image is becoming more and more indistinct. The longer he stares, the more unrecognizable it is, through no fault of his. Couldn't we help him know this?

The reading eye, on the contrary, plays over the word, refreshing short-term memory of its appearance, and uses strategies for identification. Unless the child is given the meaning soon and some ways to identify the word, the association of meaning with symbol may not be established. How can we help a child become a reader instead of a starer? Are we spending more time waiting for the right answer than teaching the child how to look at a word?

Not so many years ago a study showed that the skilful mature reader recognizes words by shape, but that children cannot do this. As a result, some people thought children shouldn't have the experience of recognizing words by shape. That is almost like saying, "Don't teach them or they may learn to do it."

A child whose reading skills are short of recognizing words by shape is retarded in becoming a skilful and rapid reader. The reading eye can take in not only the print on which it focusses, but 12 to 15 letter-spaces to the right of the focus. This accounts for the eye-voice span able readers attain in oral reading. One short word immediately to the right of the focus can be identified by its spelling, but the

remainder of the words have to be identified by shape and by the meaning and parts of speech the reader expects.

If children cannot recognize words by their shapes and if they cannot anticipate coming meanings and the parts of speech which will convey them, they cannot take advantage of peripheral vision at the right of their focus. They will engage in word-by-word reading and waste time focussing on every word. Worst of all, they will tend to think of print as a string of words instead of groupings of words in cognitive relationships.

Psycholinguists speak of chunking, by which they mean the practice of gathering into meaningful groups words which together answer the questions a mind poses. For example, the sentence which might be read by a word-by-word reader as *He . . . went . . . to . . . the . . . house . . . in . . . a . . . great . . . hurry,* would be read by a mature reader as *he went to the house in a great hurry.* The first group tells what someone did, the second answers to what destination, the third describes the manner or speed.

There is no natural law which declares that a child must wait until he is grown up to chunk as he reads. Chunking is an evidence of understanding syntax, not initially the cause of it. What has the insightful parent or teacher done to help the child group words in the sentence which are answers to *who, when, where, what, why, how* of the cognitive elements in the sentence?

Another aspect of teaching reading has to do with which words we teach first. Logically it would seem easy for the child to start reading all short words and gradually move to larger ones. A number of reading programs start, as you know, with one, two and three-letter words, and produce sentences such as the famous *Nan can fan Dan.* Similar materials were tried a good many decades ago.

There is no doubt that this is a good way of avoiding the four-letter words. But the evidence is that trigrams (three-letter words) take longer to process than other words. That is to say, it takes the child longer to identify them. So, if we are looking for a fast beginning to build the child's confidence, we must argue against the erection of a solid wall of trigrams between the child and the natural variety of English prose. Trigrams can have their share of the action without dominating the child's whole perception of reading.

You will find a great deal of this kind of information in the forthcoming revision of Singer and Ruddell's *Theoretical Models and Processes of Reading,* which the International Reading Association is publishing in 1976. It is full of research evidence which has been waiting to be noticed for a hundred years or less, up to and including 1975.

Psycholinguists are informing us of the relative difficulty of various types of sentence structure. When teachers and publishers realize the kinds of structures which are difficult, they can provide ways of impressing the children with those relationships before significant communication is ruined. When teachers and publishers want to increase the eye-voice span, they will produce exercises in which expectation is fostered by familiar situations and in which sentence endings tend to be predictable from previous material.

One principle is that modifiers should be kept in expected positions. For example, the English reader expects an adjective to precede the noun it modifies. There is scientific evidence that the sentence *That rose is red,* which separates *rose* from *red,* is harder than the sentence *That is a red rose.*

Sentences with passive verbs tend to be harder than those with active forms, probably because the English speaker commonly mentions the actor first, rather than the acted-upon. *My watch was stolen* is a less-direct way of saying *Someone stole my watch.*

Ideas expressed negatively are harder to process than ideas expressed positively. *Coffee isn't to my taste* leaves the reader to decide that something else is preferable.

Similarly, sentences containing conditional clauses are hard to process. Mothers can be disgusted if, when they say, "You may go if you wear your sweater", the child goes without his sweater. Even more bewildering is "You may not go unless you wear your sweater." An amiable child may put on his sweater and stay home.

The word *although* is one of the hardest adverbial conjunctions for Canadian and U.S. children, partly because it is rare in the spoken language. It is more usual to say, "It was raining but I decided to go anyway," than to say, "I decided to go although it was raining."

At the 1975 meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Isakson of Wichita State University reported a study which he and McConkie of Cornell had completed on the processing of sentences in which the simple-subject is separated from the predicate by a clause, in this case a clause which omits the relative pronoun. They paired sentences which began alike, such as *The mother trusted . . .* In one of the pair the next word was *the,* leading the reader to expect the object of a NVN sentence. The other sentence was *The mother trusted by,* causing the reader to realize that the predicate was still to come. Fagan of the University of Alberta had found that sentences in which parts of the structure are omitted — in this case the *who was* of *The mother who was trusted by* — create a good deal of confusion for the reader. The *who* is a signal he needs when the signal of intonation is absent. Isakson and McConkie found

evidence in their study that as soon as the reader came to *the*, which signaled the beginning of the object, he apparently took extra time to process the meaning of the sentence. When, instead, he came to *by*, he knew the predicate was still to come and delayed the extra processing until he had more evidence to use. Some people have been of the opinion that a reader doesn't process the meaning of a sentence until he has completed the whole sentence, but this is apparently not the case.

In passing I should mention that Fagan and others have produced a book for the National Council of Teachers of English entitled *Measures for Research and Evaluation in the English Language Arts.* The copyright date is 1975. As a loyal member of the National Council of Teachers of English I am proud that it has sponsored this publication. As Past President of IRA, I wish we had. It will be helpful both to researchers and to teachers looking for ways of measuring or evaluating.

Chomsky has pointed out that children can be confused about the roles of characters in these sentences:

I told Joe to go.

I promised Joe to go.

On the surface, it looks as though Joe is to do the going in both cases. The omitted structures would have clarified the situations:

I told Joe that he should go.

I promised Joe that I would go.

A new IRA publication is by John Dawkins, *Syntax and Readability*. Teachers will find in it many suggestions on linguistic booby-traps for young readers.

Linguists have already given a great deal of help on identifying structural problems with sentences, but little as yet on problems of sentence-to-sentence relationships. Our teaching emphases lead children to think that if they know the words, they can read. We teach the new words in a selection and then ask comprehension questions. I believe that some teachers have genuine faith in the magic of words in a string — that the string will bring comprehension, but for many children, it won't.

Even those of us who have tried to be helpful, do it in reverse. That is, instead of showing them how to sense the relationships among ideas as they read along, we demonstrate the finished product and say, "Now you do it." We say, "This is a paragraph of cause and effect (that should be the child's discovery, not our declaration). This is the way it is constructed. See how this sentence adds to this and how that sentence adds to that? Here is another cause and effect paragraph. Now you decide what the cause and effect are in it." If

you want to know what kind of thinking I believe teachers should be able to do if they are to be helpful to readers, read an article in an issue of *The Reading Teacher*, February, 1972, entitled "Package, Ritual, and Insight". It is my legacy to the profession, and I don't want it swept under the rug.

I should like to close this paper with a simple example of skilful reading. What does the able reader do with a story like this:

"I saw a hungry little cat. I put
some milk in a bowl. The little cat
drank the milk."

The good reader is aware of the problem in the first sentence — that the cat was hungry. The word *milk* in the second sentence is no surprise to a cat-lover. Nor is it a surprise that the effect on the cat of the presence of milk was to drink. The first sentence may stir pity in the reader, and he expects the person to do something about it. The speaker, too, has pity. Now both the speaker and the reader expect the consequence which will satisfy them both.

The good reader recognizes problems. He anticipates steps in their solution. He holds himself in readiness for a satisfying conclusion, and effect of a cause. Actually, in this example, there are two causes and two effects:

Because the cat was hungry, I gave him milk.
Because I gave him milk, he drank it.

Notice that the effect in the first sentence, *I gave him milk*, becomes the cause of the second.

So you see, the good reader is cognitively and effectively a detective. He is constantly on the lookout for the over-riding purpose of the passage. He can abstract hunger into a problem. He senses that milk is a step in the solution, and he expects the author to finish what he has set into motion. The reader is sensitive to the overall pattern of the author's thinking, the direction in which he is going, and is actively engaged in matching this sense of direction to the content he encounters.

You have heard the expression, "He can't see the forest for the trees." That is what happens to readers when they are led to conceive of reading as a series of letter-sound correspondences and words in a string. That is what happens to administrators when they puzzle over which of the many current programmes is best for their students. That is what happens to teachers when they have to decide what to put together for the children to do each day and find themselves testing instead of teaching.

Reading is a living thing, a challenge to reasoning, to feelings, to language, and to experience. A child who knows that, will lack neither

the desire nor the attitude to become a successful reader. When we adults develop a clear conception of the reading process and begin to take nothing for granted about the child's understanding, the teaching of reading will finally have caught up with the invention of the code. What a blow that will be for the dolphin.

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TESTING FOR LITERACY 8

Jonathon Anderson

Despite massive literacy campaigns since the 1920s the number of illiterates is rising. How is this paradox explained? In this paper a number of important questions is examined. What minimum skills, for example, are required for literacy? Assuming a definition such as "literacy consists in the ability to write a simple message and to read a piece of prose with understanding", how does one operationally define and therefore test "ability to write", "a simple message", "to read . . . with understanding", "a piece of prose"? Do measures of industrialization and literacy correlate? Why? Does the recognition of illiteracy as a problem coincide with the growth of the megalopolis? How do the levels of literacy among minority groups compare with the rest of society?

A major question asked of teachers by parents and other lay persons is whether standards of literacy are falling as the media often suggest. Do we know? What is the evidence? Are the traditional definitions of literacy adequate for today's complex society?

Literacy in Perspective

Literacy, like the chameleon, can take on a variety of shades of meaning. It can also be described using a variety of terms. At the United Kingdom Reading Association Conference in 1971, for example, which had as its theme "Literacy at all Levels", one writer (Southgate, 1972) spoke of literacy, language arts, and language skills as being more-or-less synonymous terms. On the other side of the Atlantic a recent report (University of Texas, 1975) speaks of functional literacy, survival literacy, and coping skills. Defining literacy is like the oft quoted story of the three blind men who, when confronted with an elephant, were each asked to describe it. One felt the elephant's tail and said it was a brush; another felt the elephant's leg and decided it must be a tree; and the third felt the elephant's side and concluded it was a wall.

The meaning given to the term literacy, like the blind men's perception of the elephant, is determined very much according to *when* and for whom it is defined. To go back just 500 years, to about the time of the discovery of the printing press by Johannes Gutenberg, the development of literacy skills hardly presented a pressing problem. Even 200 years ago, at about the time of James Watt's invention of the steam engine which heralded the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, the situation had changed very little. Not so today. In

today's print-dominated world it has been estimated that each year more than a thousand new professional journals appear, each day whole forests are consumed to present the daily news. The development of reading and writing skills and the maintenance of standards, are contentious issues in today's contemporary society. The individual who has failed to acquire literacy skills is seriously handicapped. The factors leading to this dramatic change over the past two centuries have been, according to one writer (Neijs, 1954), (1) the habit of bible reading, (2) the growth of primary education, (3) the development of national economies, and (4) the growing need for literate electorates — or, in other words, religion, education, economics, and politics. Just as the need for literacy has changed over time, so does the need change from place to place. The urban commuter from Sydney needs a different order of literacy skills from the mountaineering guide in Nepal or the Southsea island farmer-fisherman.

Literacy is then a relative and a dynamic concept. Its meaning changes with time and according to place; a meaning that would fit one particular period and one walk of life would not be appropriate at another period and in a different place.

This paper, in an attempt to identify some of the issues and problems in testing for literacy, touches upon three major studies that have focussed on the measurement of literacy. In one of the studies literacy was measured across place; in another it was measured across time; and in the third it was measured across time and place. A fourth study is described in which the major effort has been devoted to developing a conceptual framework for literacy skills preparatory to testing.

Some World Trends

It is useful at the outset to try to obtain a world view of the extent of literacy. Certain major trends are apparent from the literacy surveys conducted by UNESCO (1972). The following five are probably the major ones:

1. The number of literate adults in the world is rising. Examination of Table 1 shows that the steady growth in numbers of literates in the twenty years since 1950 is expected to continue for the remainder of the present decade.
2. The number of illiterates also continues to rise and this is expected to continue according to the forward projections to 1980. This trend appears to run counter to the one above but of course it is explained by the exploding world population (Table 1).

3. The rate of illiteracy is falling. Table 1 shows that in 1950 the rate of illiteracy was not far short of fifty per cent; after ten years it had fallen to about two-fifths; and after another ten years to about one third. The rate is expected to continue to fall.

TABLE 1

Estimated Numbers (in millions) and Percentage of Illiterate Adults (15+) in the world*

Year	Adult Population	Literates	Illiterates	Percentage of Illiterates
1950	1579	879	700	44.3
1960	1869	1134	735	39.3
1970	2287	1504	783	34.2
1980†	2823	2003	820	29.0

*Source: *Literacy 1969-1971*, Paris: UNESCO, 1972 †Projected.

4. The percentage of illiteracy differs markedly in different parts of the world. In some parts of the world (viz. North America and Europe) illiteracy has been virtually irradicated; Africa and the Arab States have the highest percentage of illiterates; Oceania which includes Australia, New Zealand and the surrounding islands has, according to the UNESCO figures, an illiteracy rate of more than ten per cent.
5. In all regions of the world (including North America, Europe, and Oceania) there are more female illiterates than male illiterates. And in the ten year period from 1960 to 1970, illiteracy among males decreased faster than among females.

The IEA Surveys of Achievement

One of the major difficulties encountered in the UNESCO literacy surveys is the question of definition. When is an individual considered literate? The chameleonlike nature of the term is seen in the varied definitions included in Table 2. In some countries individuals are counted as literate if they have been enrolled in school for a given number of years; in other countries individuals are simply asked if they are literate. Where tests of literacy are administered, different meanings are attached to "ability to write", "a simple message", "to read with understanding". Some of the definitions in Table 2 go beyond reading and writing and include, for instance, ability with numbers, filling in of forms, and consulting timetables.

TABLE 2

Literacy: Some Definitions

Illiterate — a reading ability less than that of an average seven year old.

Semi-literate — a reading ability between the ages of seven and nine years. (Ministry of Education, England, 1950.)

Literacy — the ability to read and write *(The Concise Oxford Dictionary).*

In many countries a person is considered literate if he has been enrolled at school for more than two or three years (e.g., in the United States a person is automatically considered literate if he has attended school for six years regardless of the grade for which he may be enrolled).

An illiterate is any person ten years of age or over who is unable to read or write (U.S. Bureau of the Census).

In general terms literacy may be thought of as "receiving and transmitting of ideas through the written word". More specifically, "literacy consists in the ability to write a simple message and to read a piece of prose with understanding" (Neijs, K. *Literacy Teaching for Adults.* South Pacific Commission, 1954).

"A person is literate when he has acquired the essential knowledge and skills which enable him to engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning in his group and community and whose attainment in reading, writing and arithmetic make it possible for him to continue to use these skills towards his own and the community's development" (UNESCO, 1962).

"Many people no longer consider the ability merely to read and write enough to make a person truly literate. He must have enough education to be able to read, write, and use numbers with some degree of skill in order to meet the demands of society. The term *functional illiteracy* has emerged from the need for a higher level of ability. A functional illiterate is one who cannot read and write well enough to perform any but the most basic tasks (Freeman Butts, *World Book Encyclopedia).*

"In an advanced industrial society a person with less than ten or twelve years of schooling is functionally illiterate" (Cipolla, C. M., *Literacy and Development in the West.* Penguin Books, 1969).

Functionally illiterate — unable to read and write at the level of simple every day instructions, fill in forms or consult a timetable; in fact, with insufficient literacy skills for survival' (Council of Adult Education, *The Way Out: A Pilot Project in Adult Literacy. 1974).*

"Literacy is the basic communication skill that enables the individual to extend the range of his contact well beyond his immediate environment" (Harman, D. *Community Fundamental Education.* 1974).

Definitions of literacy have to change to meet the demands of an increasingly complex society (The Bullock Report. *A Language for Life,* 1975).

The questions of definition, of goals and objectives, were some of the problems that confronted the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) when it embarked on its cross-national studies of achievement. These studies (in science, reading comprehension, literature, French and English learned as foreign languages, and civics), conducted across twenty-two countries and involving the collection of more than one hundred and fifty million bits of information, have been described as the largest ever undertaken in the field of education (Postlethwaite, 1975). The aim of the reading comprehension study (Thorndike, 1973) was more than the testing of literacy at different age levels; an endeavour was made to identify the factors contributing to differences in achievement between countries, between schools, and between students. In the seven years that this study took to complete, more than half the time was devoted to developing the test measures which reflects the complexity of the task. It is not intended to discuss these measures in any detail here other than to indicate the three reading test components. There was a reading comprehension test of the traditional multiple-choice variety, a test of reading speed, and a word knowledge test. A national committee was set up in each of the fifteen countries surveyed to judge the appropriateness of the tests at the three levels tested (10, 14, and 18 year levels) and to conduct the try-out testing. According to Thorndike, there was consensus that these tests were an adequate measure of the educational objectives within each of the countries, which is an interesting finding in itself, although it would have been useful to have further details of the rationale for selecting these facets of reading for testing.

Thorndike's survey of reading comprehension education has been criticized on certain methodological grounds (Downing and Dalrymple-Alford, 1974-1975), yet the major achievement of this and of the other IEA studies has been the development of reliable measures that could be used across languages and across countries. Bloom (1975) succintly summed up the significance of the IEA studies:

> The IEA evaluation instruments give an excellent picture of the state of evaluation and education (objectives and context) in the countries represented in these studies. The evaluation instruments also represent an international consensus on the knowledge and objectives most worth learning (Bloom, 1975, p. 67).

While the aim of the IEA has never been to run a kind of 'cognitive Olympics', the studies do confirm one of the major trends noted in the UNESCO literacy surveys, namely, the wide gap in educational achievement between the developing and the developed nations of the world. The IEA studies show what is capable of being achieved

under more ideal sets of conditions and, most valuably, they provide base-line data for judging the efforts of schools and students.

The Question of Standards

A major point of controversy in Australia today, and also in Britain judging by the Bullock Report (Department of Education and Science, 1975), is the question of standards and levels of literacy. Many employers, parents, politicians, and even teachers, are saying that the standard of written and spoken English in schools is declining, that students cannot cope with even simple levels of reading required for their courses, that school leavers are incapable of completing job applications properly. The blame is laid on the schools which, it is claimed, have abandoned many of the traditional disciplines in the quest for relevancy, and are neglecting their task of teaching basic skills in favour of self-expression and creativity.

Have reading standards in fact fallen? What evidence is available? The Bullock Committee received many submissions on declining standards in literacy and in their report is summarized the main English evidence, a series of surveys conducted by the National Foundation for Educational Research. In broad terms the data from these surveys suggested that for both eleven year olds and fifteen year olds reading standards improved quite dramatically between 1948 and the early 1960s but that, in the succeeding ten years, reading levels declined slightly or, at best, remained constant. A one sentence summary can hardly do justice to the full-length chapter contained in the Bullock Report or to the studies which are summarized therein. The Report lists many limitations and caveats in interpreting the results of these national surveys: the two tests used, both of the incomplete sentence type, were thought to measure only "a narrow aspect of reading comprehension"; both tests contained vocabulary which tended to date them; the tests failed to discriminate satisfactorily at all levels of ability; and problems in sampling were evident.

The evidence, then, to support the claim that reading standards are declining, or to refute such a claim, is very flimsy indeed. Certainly in Australia there are no comparable surveys conducted over time to shed any light on students' achievement in reading. Speculation on standards may, therefore, be expected to continue. The sad fact is that although it is known how many schools there are, how many millions of dollars are spent on schools, how many books per pupil there are, and so on, we do not have any precise idea of the effects on students' achievement of these books, of the teachers, of the dollars spent. It was in the hope of answering such questions that the IEA cross-national surveys were originally conceived and one of

the major recommendations, too, of the Bullock Report was designed to provide data to answer such questions:

> A system of monitoring should be introduced which will employ new instruments to assess a wider range of attainments than has been attempted in the past and allow new criteria to be established for the definition of literacy (Department of Education and Science, 1975, p. 513).

Towards a Functional Definition of Literacy

The major weakness of the UNESCO literacy surveys is the lack of a common definition of literacy whereas the criticisms of the IEA reading comprehension study and of the national surveys cited in the Bullock Report are that the reading tests were too narrowly conceived. What is needed are new instruments to assess the range of attainments necessary for an individual to function in today's society. The Bullock Committee felt that these new instruments (in the field of reading) should determine "whether the child is able to extract meaning from the page . . . whether he can discern implied as well as explicit meaning, evaluate the material . . . and reorganize it in terms of other frames of reference" (p. 38).

Certainly these recommendations imply a wider range of reading skills than those employed in literacy testing in the past but even bolder measures seem called for. In this regard it may be helpful to try to conceive what it must be like to be illiterate in a modern urbanized society. Dickens captures some of the frustration for Jo, an illiterate, in *Bleak House:*

> It must be a strange state to be like Jo. To shuffle through the streets, unfamiliar with the shapes and in utter darkness as to the meaning of those mysterious symbols, so abundant over the shops, and at the corners of streets, and on the doors, and in the windows. To see people read, and to see people write, and to see postmen deliver letters, and not to have the least idea of all that language — to be, to every scrap of it, stone blind and dumb. It must be very puzzling to see the good company going to churches on Sundays, with their books in their hands, and to think (for perhaps Jo does think at odd times) what does it all mean, and if it means anything to anybody, how comes it that it means nothing to me? (Chap. XVI, Vol. 2).

If we were to imagine Jo living in, say, Sydney in 1975 (since literacy only really becomes meaningful within a given society at a specified time in that society's technological development), some of the mysterious symbols to confront him might include:

- unemployment forms and situations vacant columns
- income tax forms, medibank claims, insurance contracts
- telephone directories and street maps
- bus and train timetables, airline schedules
- street and traffic signs

— radio and T.V. programmes
— labels and prices in supermarkets
— signs like 'Toilet' and 'Danger'
— menus and cafeteria prices
— instructions on medicine bottles and for the use of tools
— slogans like 'Smoking is a health hazard'

As a first step in developing new testing instruments a conceptual framework that incorporates the reading demands such as those above is required. A start is underway in this direction in a study being conducted at the University of Texas (1975) where an attempt has been made to describe the requirements imposed upon individuals in terms of five general knowledge areas — consumer economics, occupational knowledge, health, community resources, government and law. Table 3 shows examples of performance requirements under these five areas for the skill of reading.

TABLE 3

Performance Requirements in Reading in terms of a Set of General Knowledge areas (after University of Texas, 1975)

Consumer Economics	Occupational Knowledge	Health	Community Resources	Government and Law
Reading a newspaper grocery ad	Reading a newspaper help-wanted ad	Reading and interpreting a health insurance policy	Reading a movie schedule	Reading a pamphlet on an individual's rights after arrest

Within each of the general knowledge areas the Texas study identified three levels of performance requirements. In the area of occupational knowledge, for instance, the hierarchy of levels of performance requirements is:

1. *goals* (e.g., "to develop a level of occupational knowledge which will enable adults to secure employment in accordance with their individual needs and interest");
2. *objectives*, which serve to define the goals (e.g., "to identify sources of information — newspapers, radio broadcasts — which may lead to employment"); and
3. *tasks*, performance which indicates mastery of an objective (e.g., "reading a newspaper help-wanted ad").

The situation-specific requirements or tasks in reading are exemplified in Table 3 and are currently undergoing revision. A similar exercise is in progress with other skills-writing, speaking and listening,

computation, problem solving, and interpersonal relationships. As a by-product of the research, it is intended to produce a prototype test of adult functional competency (1975, personal correspondence).

The underlying methodology of this last study described has been to map the competencies an individual needs to acquire in order to function in a modern technological society. It has been recognized that literacy is not a static concept, that it is multidimensional and largely determined by societal requirements. Rather than attempt then to define the term, the approach has been to develop a taxonomy of performance skills in communication (reading, writing, speaking and listening), in computation, in problem solving, and in interpersonal relations. This approach is in line with the spirit of the Bullock Report in its advocacy for new criteria to be established and for a wider range of attainments to be assessed.

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ADULT ILLITERACY IN A LITERATE SOCIETY — EXPLANATIONS AND SOLUTIONS

9

Brian Preen

The problems of adult illiteracy have been evident for a long time in western society. The social slur associated with the inability to read, spell and write is a old as the practice of substituting an 'X' for a personal signature and while the notorious King John of Runnymede may have escaped censure for his literacy disability the same cannot be said for people of less social standing! The origin of 'Christ's Cross' is one of our earliest records of literacy disability and dates back at least a thousand years (Mathews, 1966).

Professional concern with the development of opportunities and facilities for adult illiterates to learn to read is far more recent. While Grace Fernald's earliest work in 1921 (Fernald and Keller, 1921) centred attention on brain-injured and visually disabled soldiers returning from World War 1, it was not until the 'sixties that the subject of adult illiteracy gained significant attention from professional educators. Nila Banton Smith writes in her book *American Reading Instruction*,

> Reading Instruction,
>
> Up until 1964 adult reading, as we have noted, was concerned with improving the reading ability of a comparatively small clientele; those who came to reading centers of their own accord, those who were taught in the Armed Services, and those who were taught at the establishments of business or industry. Recently, however, an entirely new and extensive theater of action has opened up to those interested in adult reading instruction. The need for teaching illiterates or functional illiterates is urgent in order that they may be able to hold jobs in a country in which automation is rapidly reducing job opportunities for unskilled workers. New materials need to be discovered and additional teachers must be found and trained to meet the reading needs of these men and women. Adult reading instruction is now faced with its greatest challenge! (Smith, 1970, pp. 375-6)

Today, the subject of illiteracy in literate societies is beginning to take up an urgency that is leading to the development of a new and valuable study in the total development of reading theory and practice — a trend that is long overdue!

Australia has not kept pace with trends in England, Europe and

North America in so far as our responsibility to adult disabled readers is concerned, little research having been directed towards the understanding and eradication of the problem. Much work lies ahead in order to discover the incidence of illiteracy in our country, to specify efficient methods of instruction, and to provide centres where total or functional illiterates can receive assistance as their needs arise. Adult illiteracy, as a significant sociological problem, carries an urgency both for professional educators and for governments and must not be allowed to persist.

Australian educators and politicians cannot afford to wait for the results of detailed surveys to emerge. There is an immediate need for a concerted effort to be made by governments, schools, colleges and universities to solve the problems of illiteracy evident in our society. The limited work already being conducted in Adult Education Centres, Reading Centres and Technical Colleges shows that demand for literacy services far outweighs the supply of current facilities.

The thesis of this paper as regards some of the explanations and solutions that underlie the phenomenon of adult illiteracy is twofold:

1. If our colleges and universities can train teachers who are well prepared and highly qualified in the field of literacy methods, then, within one decade from now, adult literacy can be overcome on the national scene.
2. A major factor underlying the high level of adult illiteracy throughout the literate world is the high priority that has been given to reading technology at the expense of competent, teacher-directed instruction. This is not to say that technology has no place in the remedial program, but too often teachers have abdicated their responsibilities and professional integrity to the machine. We cannot afford to downgrade the importance of teacher-initiated instruction, for, if we do, the problems of adult illiteracy will increase.

This paper attempts to initiate discussion on the phenomenon of illiteracy in a literate society by exploring three important questions:

1. What statistical evidence is available to provide an understanding of the incidence of adult illiteracy in various literate countries?
2. What explanations are there for this social and educational phenomenon?
3. What are some of the possible solutions that may be adopted to combat this problem in Australia?

First, however, it is necessary to sharpen the parameters of the set topic. What is meant by the widely-used term, 'illiteracy'? The UNESCO Committee on the Standardsation of Educational Statistics defines a literate person in this manner:

> A person is literate when he has acquired the essential knowledge and skills which enable him to engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning in his group and community. (UNESCO, 1971)

A national survey in the United States on 'Adult Functional Competency' conducted by the University of Texas at Austin, defines literacy competency as the ability to attain the following levels in regard to social functioning:

Consumer Economics: Ability to read a newspaper grocery ad.
Occupation: Ability to read a newspaper help wanted ad.
Health: Ability to read and interpret a health insurance policy.
Community Resources: Ability to read a movie schedule.
Law and Government: Ability to read a pamphlet on an individual's right after arrest. (Univ. Texas, 1975.)

For the continuing discussion in this paper the term, 'functional illiterate' has been adopted and refers to those people in the society over the age of fifteen who are unable to read well enough to meet the social and personal responsibilities embodied in the above definitions.

Statistics

UNESCO has always been active in its attempts to understand, explain and remedy world-wide problems of illiteracy. The results of this work show that illiteracy, on a percentage basis, is beginning to fall although the actual incidence of illiteracy is increasing (Goldstone, 1971). This is to be expected with rapid population increase in non-literate countries. The statistics indicate a slight reverse trend in literate societies, that is, a downward tendency in both percentage and incidence of illiteracy over the period 1960-1970. It may be assumed that the relatively slow population growth and better educational facilities in literate countries are responsible for this.

These statistics, however, may be misleading as they refer to totally illiterate people and may not present the full picture of reading disability in literate societies. Evidence relating to functional illiteracy is not easily obtainable but the available statistics cast some degree of concern over the whole subject of reading instruction in today's schools. A statement taken from the United States Office of Education Reading Seminars Pamphlet, May 1971, declares:

> The facts about reading failure are abundantly clear; over eight million school age children are not learning to read adequately. 16% of the enrolments in grade 1 through 12 require special instruction in reading. In most large city school systems . . . at least half the students are unable to read well enough to handle their assignments. Each year some 700,000 youngsters drop out of public school. Studies show that the average drop out is at least two years behind his age group in

> reading and other basic subjects. There are more than three million illiterates in our adult population. About 18½ million Americans lack the practical reading skills necessary to complete simplified application forms for such common needs as a driver's licence, a personal bank loan . . . (U.S. Office of Education, 1971)

If the above statements are true, it is possible to conclude that approximately 9% of the adult population of the United States is functionally illiterate. In a society that places such a heavy emphasis on literacy the above figures must cast a large question mark over the theories and practices adopted by today's schools in reading instruction.

A still more alarming statistic is to be found in the survey on 'Adult Functional Competency' conducted by the University of Texas (1975) which claims that approximately one American adult in five is functionally illiterate.

Explanations

Under this heading, this paper aims to take a comprehensive, but necessarily brief, look at the major reasons for adult illiteracy in literate societies. Five explanations are isolated for discussion:

Inadequate Instruction in the Schools

It is quite clear to anyone working in a remedial reading program with adults that inadequate school instruction is a significant cause of functional illiteracy. Data collected from pretraining interview sessions often reveals the stark fact that adult disabled readers can trace the origin of their reading problems to unfortunate, early school experiences. Four problem experiences re-appear consistently:

Lack of Readiness for Reading: This problem is common to almost every adult non-reader. The notion that all children are ready to read at 6.5 years of age has been largely responsible for the high incidence of adult illiteracy, despite the fact that Gates exploded that disastrous theory as far back as 1937. He wrote,

> Statements concerning the necessary mental age at which a pupil can be instructed to learn to read are essentially meaningless. The age for learning to read under one program, or with the methods employed by one teacher, may be entirely different from that required under other circumstances. (Gates, 1937, p. 508)

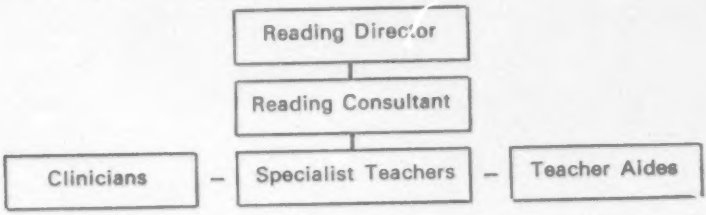
Children who come from homes where books are not read will not have learned to value reading and, in turn, will be at risk in the traditional 'beginning reading' program. Such children may not be ready to read until the prerequisite skills for the task have been developed at an age well past 6.5 years. Conversely, other children learn to read well before 6.5 years. Readiness is far from being a static concept and educators must recognize this fact.

Nevertheless, a significant number of adults is functionally illiter-

ate today because they were forced to begin the 'learning-to-read' process well before they were ready to cope with its demands.

Large Classes: Most Australian children go through their schooling years in classes with a teacher-pupil ratio of 1/30. This means that the teacher's time will be evenly divided among all her pupils with the result that those who exhibit any form of learning disability may not receive the individual attention necessary for remediation. Thus, many children with reading problems grow into adults with reading problems and enter the wider community with little hope of remedying their disability. What is worse, is that they are likely to blame themselves for their disability and suffer personality problems as the result of failure.

Too Few Specialists in the Schools: By comparison with some overseas countries Australian schools have been far too slow in the training of specialist reading personnel. The North American educational authorities have demonstrated clearly the most appropriate organization of such personnel in the schools. In most school systems with an enrolment of 300 or over, there is an organizational structure for reading instruction such as the following:



Members of the reading development teams are usually well-trained and qualified to teach reading and assist classroom teachers at all levels of schooling. There is no such planning in Australia, where remedial reading teachers are too few to meet the demands of reading disability.

Lack of Instructional System: There is not only *one* system by which reading can, or should, be taught in schools. There are as many systems as there are dedicated and thinking teachers, because reading is taught best when teachers adopt programmes suited to the needs of the children and follow these through in a systematic and professional manner. There is also a need to relate the work of one department (e.g. infants) to that of others (e.g. primary). There is a need for systematic follow-through of reading instruction from year to year until a child becomes an independent reader. Many problems arise from inconsistencies in this regard and often disabled readers

experience as many different systems as they have had years of schooling, resulting in many unnecessary literacy problems.

Inadequate Tertiary Training of Student Teachers

A large portion of the responsibility for adult functional illiteracy must be directed towards the tertiary institutions — the teachers' colleges, colleges of advanced education and universities. In the past, very few such institutions have offered adequate courses in the teaching of developmental, corrective and remedial reading. The strange dichotomy has existed in New South Wales and in other states, where students enrolled in Infants' Courses were given training in the theory and practice of 'Beginning Reading', while students taking Primary Courses received training in 'Reading Development and Improvement'. This procedure rested on the rationale that children in infants' school needed to learn to read while children in the primary school required only developmental skills. This assumption that children could read by third grade was fraught with dangers for the slower children and those with learning disabilities for often they were placed in the charge of teachers who were inadequately trained to deal with their reading problems.

There is a need for tertiary institutions to offer undergraduate and post-graduate courses in all aspects of reading theory and practice. The trends in this direction over the last five years have been pleasing but more training and facilities are still required. Post-graduate diplomas and degree courses in Reading, carrying rigorous internships, must be available through our tertiary institutions so that the schools will be adequately equipped to deal with childhood disabilities which so often result in adult illiteracy.

Inadequate 'Catch-up' Facilities in the Wider Community

It is generally accepted among reading researchers that, once a child has left school with a severe reading disability, it is most unlikely that assistance will be available to help him eradicate that difficulty. There are only a few vocational and community 'catch-up' facilities to help these unfortunate citizens to learn to read. Literacy centres must develop and be staffed by highly qualified personnel in order to provide day and night services to those in need. In turn, employers must accept the responsibility for drawing to the notice of their employees these services available at literacy centres. Unless 'catch-up' facilities become available, thousands of Australians will continue to be deprived of opportunities for greater personal and vocational development.

Inadequate Community Concern

Western society is a competitive society: the notion of the self-

made man has been with us for a long time. This part of the Australian philosophy has helped to provide a stereotype of the learning disabled person as being inferior, slow, lazy or uncaring about his plight, while lack of social and vocational advancement is seen as the result of his own inertia. This unfortunate attitude widens the gulf between the adult illiterate and necessary instructional help and, in the past, little practical educational assistance has been given to the adult illiterate. Even where technical colleges have offered non-academic qualification courses, the adult illiterate has suffered because so many of these have been offered through correspondence, automatically excluding those who could not read.

Inadequate Professional Concern

Professionals at the tertiary level have shown little concern with the problems relating to adult illiteracy. As indicated above, the subject was given little, if any, emphasis in tertiary institutions before the early 'sixties. There have been no whole-hearted efforts to isolate causal factors, determine the social implications of illiteracy and locate effective instructional strategies. There is a pressing need for colleges and universities to launch research programmes and to train high-quality graduates to work with the functionally illiterate members of our population.

Solutions

Underlying this paper is the firm belief that solutions to the problems of adult illiteracy in Australia are within our grasp if we give heed to the following courses of action:

Improved Teacher Preparation

To reiterate, better training of teachers is necessary if the problem of adult illiteracy is to be overcome. With regard to this training it is essential that tertiary institutions adopt the following principles and procedures.

First, training in reading should be improved at all levels of schooling. The absurd status divisions among departments must be overcome as all are complementary parts of the same continuum as far as reading development is concerned. Teachers must understand what happens in every stage of reading development as well as being proficient in their own, while instruction at all levels of schooling must receive the same status recognition from educational authorities. The development of later reading skills will only be as good as the quality of fundamental skills laid down during initial instruction.

Second, tertiary training in the future must be inservice as well as pre-service. It is no longer acceptable to expect trained teachers to

keep up with current trends simply through their own reading: teachers need assistance to make sense of the plethora of publications available today. Research findings must be communicated to classroom teachers. In the face of the statistics relating to the incidence of illiteracy in the Western world, schools must demand of their tertiary institutions a greater contribution to classroom teaching.

Third, training ought to be aimed at producing highly competent classroom practitioners. One of the errors of teacher training over the past few decades is that the personal development of the teacher takes precedence over the development of his professional skills. It has been said that 'how-to-do-it' courses have no place in college and university training, but Australian educators must reassess their position so far as teacher training is concerned. If so-called 'how-to-do-it' courses assist adult illiterates to read, then they must have a place in every teacher training course.

Fourth, teacher training institutions must permit students to elect to take courses in 'Literacy Methods for Adults'. An experimental project being conducted at the Armidale College of Advanced Education, where thirty students are participating in a final year course entitled 'Diagnostic and Remedial Reading for the Adult Illiterate', is proving most successful. Students are engaged in an internship where they are teaching adults to read on the basis of one student to one adult non-reader. As well as lecture requirements, students work their internship on the basis of three hours' practical instruction per week. Adults are learning to read, college students are learning to teach reading to disabled students under careful supervision, and the skills acquired in this internship appear to transfer adequately to classroom reading at all levels of schooling.

High Quality Teaching in the School Situation

Teachers of the future will need to graduate from tertiary institutions with the following skills:

Diagnostic Skills: During training the skills of precision diagnosis must be acquired so that specific strengths and weaknesses of disabled readers can be detected. Knowledge of a student's strengths enables a teacher to design a remedial programme which can start instruction at the learner's level of ability and thus provide immediate success. Knowledge of a student's weaknesses indicates clearly to the teacher what must be remedied to ensure the development of efficient reading skills.

Remedial Skills: A rich legacy of remedial techniques and strategies has already been provided by the scholars, teachers and researchers of the past. From Grace Fernald's work in 1921 to the principles out-

lined by Donald Hebb in the late 'sixties there have been established all the techniques and strategies necessary to teach reading adequately. The fact that we have so many disabled readers in our schools and so many illiterates in our society demonstrates that we have failed to learn from our rich heritage! Tertiary courses of the future must acquaint teachers with the firmly established principles of remediation in reading as well as to search for more precise methods of instruction.

Supervisory Skills: Every school requires a team of reading specialists to help direct and supervise the teaching of reading. By supervision, it is not suggested that classroom teachers be spied upon in the ordinary pedagogical affairs of the teaching day, but that guidance and assistance be provided for teachers who are faced with the problems of teaching reading. Guidance must be offered by those professionals who are thoroughly trained and specializing in reading theory and practice. This type of teacher assistance could well enable schools to make significant inroads into the problems of reading disability.

Adequate Community Services

Adult illiteracy, whether total or functional, cannot be challenged within the schools alone. We have a responsibility to the present adult generation as well as to children. As suggested above, 'catch-up' and referral agencies must be developed where adult illiterates can receive advice about their literacy problems. Before such agencies will be of any use, however, they must be complemented by teaching centres where high quality instruction is available to any needy person; centres based on the models offered in the Adult Basic Education Colleges and the Community Colleges in the United States would be successful in Australia. Such centres should be established in the technical or Further Education colleges throughout the country and staffed in such a way as to permit services to be offered during the day or evening.

Conclusion

The problem of adult illiteracy in Australia can, and should, be challenged in the immediate future. This challenge should come from every phase of the educational machine — the schools, tertiary institutions and further education colleges. If such a challenge is supported by governmental assistance, then we have the adequate professional skills and facilities to solve our own problems within a decade. For the good of so many unfortunate Australian illiterates let us take up this challenge now!

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LITERACY FOR ADULT ABORIGINES 10

Eirlys Richards

Have you ever thought of describing the writing of the letter *a* in this way:

> 'I take the pencil around from the south over the top, then around in the north, then down to the bottom, around to the south, then up, until they join up. Then I take it back down to the bottom.'

I hadn't until I began teaching literacy to the Walmatjari Aborigines at Fitzroy Crossing. To a people whose whole life is direction-oriented, it was the most natural way to describe this process of writing *a*, and all of the other letters which were involved in this new skill of putting language on paper.

The People

The Walmatjari are a desert tribe whose original country is the Great Sandy Desert, south of the Kimberley area of Western Australia. Today it appears on the surface that the Walmatjari have acculturated, but there are many basic values and attitudes of their own which are retained and which reflect a world view that obviously has its foundation in their pre-contact life in the desert. Language is an expression of this.

For communication with Europeans and Aborigines of other tribal groups, all adults speak English to some degree, but Walmatjari continues to be their most fluent and comfortable means of communication with each other. Most Walmatjari adults beyond the age of twenty-five years, have not been through the Government education system. It was for this non-literate adult group that we developed a set of primers to teach reading and writing in the Walmatjari language.

The men and women whom my co-worker, Joyce Hudson, and I taught were in the thirty to fifty years age bracket. Selection was on the basis of interest. Motivation was strongest among those whose chief interest was to read the parts of the Bible that had been translated into Walmatjari.

Two observations can be made at this point with regard to literacy for this group of people:

1. Because they are a people whose traditions were only oral,

they have excellent memories. This proved advantageous for any memorization of sight words and phrases, but a hindrance to the recognition of relationships between syllables and the discovery of new syllables on the basis of analogy.

2. Books had never been part of the Walmatjari culture. They had seen people read from English books, but they did not know what process brought words to the lips of the reader. We knew that pre-reading skills had to be well taught before the primer was begun.

The Language

To understand what was involved in teaching Walmatjari literacy, the language should be examined (Hudson and Richards, 1969). There are seventeen consonants and six vowels. They are p, t, j, k, rt, m, n, ny, ng, rn, l, ly, rl, w, y, rr, r, a, aa, u, uu, i and ii.

Unlike English, it is a phonetic alphabet; i.e. the symbol(s) assigned to each significant sound in the language consistently represents that sound. This makes for a minimal number of items to be taught in the equipping of the pupil for learning to read. The smallest unit of the language that can be isolated is a syllable as neither the consonants nor the vowels can be pronounced in isolation. Therefore, in our primer lessons, the syllable was the smallest part of a word that could receive focus in the teaching of the relationship between sound and symbol.

All languages have restrictions as to where certain letters can occur. In English, *ng* is restricted to the word final or word medial positions. It *never* occurs word initially. In Walmatjari, consonants *rr* and *ly* and all vowels cannot occur word initially. The consonants *m* and *ng* cannot occur word finally. This meant that in the teaching material, syllables beginning with *rr, ly* or vowels, or syllables ending in *m* or *ng* should not have been isolated because the pupils could not normally pronounce them. However, this is an area of teaching which continues to pose problems.

Walmatjari is a suffixing language. The meaning or function of a word is modified by suffixes. There may be as many as four or five suffixes in addition to the stem of the word.

e.g. nganpayiwarntiwarlanyjangka 'from the other men'

nganpayi	- warnti	- warlany	- jangka
man	plural	other	from

This means that there are very long words which need special focus in teaching.

One further aspect is the almost free word order of the sentence, except for one class of words which generally follows the first word

of the sentence. e.g. the Walmatjari sentence meaning 'The man carried the child' can be written in the following ways:

1. Nganpayirlu pa kanya yapa.
   man (subj.) he-him carried child (obj.)
2. Yapa pa kanya nganpayirlu.
3. Kanya pa yapa nganpayirlu.
4. Nganpayirlu pa yapa kanya.

This means that the pupil, when reading sentences and stories has a minimum of contextual clues from which to make educated guesses based on his knowledge of the language.

The Materials

Before any literacy teaching could begin, primers had to be made. We therefore set about constructing a series of books which took the pupil gradually through all of the symbols and many of the suffixes of the language. The method is eclectic and was developed by Gudschinsky (1973), late International Literacy Co-ordinator for the Summer Institute of Linguistics. With this method, the pupil learns one strategy for sounding out content words (nouns, adjectives, verbs etc.), and another for recognizing the grammatical devices (prepositions affixes, etc.) as sight pieces in the context of a word, phrase or sentence. Graded story material is included in each unit with a heavy emphasis on it being linguistically correct (but not simplified), culturally accurate and relevant, and interesting.

In the early units of the first primer, the stories are not as interesting as we would have liked. Our choice of letters to be taught in the initial lessons, just would not produce the most exciting stories. Otherwise the method was followed quite closely. Learning to write was part of each literacy lesson.

Over the past five years, we have prepared experimental drafts, testing them, and incorporating changes in each new edition. We were glad to involve a Walmatjari man, Mr. Peter Skipper, in the last edition. He is a graduate of an earlier class, and provided most of the stories. Materials did not stop at primers. Over the years we have gradually amassed about fifty post-primer booklets. These include stories told by Walmatjari people and transcribed from tapes, those written by some of the newly literate, and others translated from English. The subject matter booklets includes experience stories, customs, legends and translations of both secular and religious material.

Classes

Between 1969 and 1974, we have held five literacy classes. There

have been as few as two and as many as seven pupils in each. Four have been strictly for men and one for women. Three others are currently being held in another Walmatjari community. In each case, another member of the Summer Institute of Linguistics team or I have been the teacher, except for a month or so when Peter Skipper, under supervision, took over the women's class. The venue has been outdoors in the shade house on our property, at first, and later in the grounds of the local school. Though we encouraged the setting up of a class place in their camp area, the idea was rejected on the grounds that their children would be too great a distraction there. From one to three o'clock in the afternoon is 'siesta time' in the 'north', and this was the time the men elected to come for the class. The women on the other hand were free to come at ten o'clock each morning. One very keen men's class felt that they were not moving fast enough with one lesson a day and began coming for an hour after breakfast as well as the afternoon session. Each class lasted from one to one and a half hours.

The situation was informal. Seating was on the ground, the most comfortable position for most (though not us). We used blackboards, printed charts of the primer page, flash cards of words and syllables, pocket charts and small individual syllable cards for word building, individual primers and exercise books. We attempted to give all instructions and teaching in Walmatjari. We have developed a 'patter' or speech routine for introducing the various parts of the lesson. This is a crucial part of the teaching.

There was also a need for new vocabulary to be found to cope with the naming of such things as pencil, chalk, letter, syllable, word, line and page. The pupils have often surprised us by their choice of terms. For example, a letter can be referred to as a person. The letter *p* is said to have a big stomach. A square or circle drawn around a word or syllable is a yard (cattle yard).

Problems

When outside agents set up a learning programme, as we have, for people of another culture and language, there are sure to be certain problems. Though we have spent much time studying their language and culture we continue to be amazed at what the Walmatjari sees as logical and likewise his non-comprehension of what we consider logical, when we apply the logic from our own culture to the experimental primer lessons. For instance, during one of the classes, it was discovered that our reference to the beginning and end of words was back to front. In Walmatjari, the beginning of the word is called the back part and the end is called the front part. They see it this way

because, as we read along from left to right, the end of the word (the front part) is towards the direction of our eye movement. We have adjusted the vocabulary and now refer to it in this way. Imagine the hindrance this must have been to the pupils of the earlier classes, and how hard it is for us to remember, while pointing to the last syllable, to call it the first.

Recognition of pictures has not been as we anticipated. For instance, the focus point of a picture is not necessarily what we expect. To the Walmatjari it may be an obscure object in the background, and the whole purpose of the picture is lost. An animal is not necessarily identified by the shape of its overall body, but by the shape or position of its ears or limbs. In one picture of a bullock lying down, the European artist drew the ears flattened back on the head. This was enough to make the Walmatjari identify it as a donkey running. This of course, highlights the need for:

1. indigenous artists to illustrate the stories, or
2. the teaching of the reading of pictures.

As the pupils are ex-desert dwellers, trachoma has left its mark on their vision. One or two can only see the printed page with a good deal of positioning of the head and squinting. The size of the print in books is not as important as boldness and clarity of letters in relation to their distinctive features.

We are learning that continual daily classes for months on end is not as conducive to learning as short concentrated periods interspersed with breaks.

Men have proved by far the best pupils. They work harder at the task and regard the whole idea of reading more seriously than the women. This is to be expected as in the Walmatjari culture it is the men who are involved with the important decisions for the community. As women teaching men, we had a few problems. It was a most uncultural arrangement, but because we were offering the literacy that they badly wanted, we were accepted. It was a very low-key teacher role we had to play. On the occasions when only one man came to class, it became a discover-for-yourself lesson, with promptings without fuss from the teacher where the material was new.

Where to From Here?

All that has been done in adult literacy so far has been on a small scale and experimental. The twelve adults who have learned to read continue to read independently from the Walmatjari post-primer books which are available for purchase. Some are enjoying using their writing skills by writing letters to fellow-literates when they are away.

For further adult literacy at Fitzroy Crossing, we are planning to

help equip some of the men and women to do the teaching. Some have shown interest in this and one had shown ability in the class he has taken. It would be short-sighted to consider literacy only in the vernacular and so a transition programme from Walmatjari to English literacy is also in the planning.

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READING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

11

A. H. Kerr

Reading is essential to schooling as we know it. Indeed if present trends to individual programmes and contract learning in open classrooms continue, reading will be even more important in the next ten years than it has been in the past. Migrant children on the whole, however, have the greatest difficulty in learning to read a language with which they are unfamiliar, and the majority of them in later years are severely hampered by weaknesses in sustained comprehension of anything but trivial material. My aim in this paper is to examine some of the major difficulties that confront migrant learners in order that we may develop some kind of a strategy for better attack on reading English as a second language.

Theoretical Background

"Aha!" some may say, "here comes the academic to confuse the issue with his impractical theoretical background". Let me say at the outset that I am not a dealer in the kind of theory often defined as "what everybody knows expressed in language that nobody understands". I see theoretical background as a kind of framework that allows consistent and useful interpretations to be made by facilitating the integration of several views of a problem, views which might otherwise only add to confusion.

In relation to reading English as a second language, I want to have a framework that allows us to take an overall look at such diverse things as sound systems, alphabets, spelling systems, vocabulary, structure, and cultural differences. But all are part of reading and must be taken into consideration.

One of the most useful recent contributions to understanding language behaviour, including reading, has come from the communications field. Current definitions of language tend to be couched in terms like the following:

> "Language is a system of human, vocal behaviour, culturally acquired, for the purposes of transmitting information.
>
> (Cornfield, 1966, p. 6)

Although Cornfield's definition refers to speech, we can quite easily

extend it to include reading. It stresses language (and reading) as systematic behaviour, learnt within a particular culture, which is used to transmit information. This function of transmitting information allows us to borrow a helpful theoretical background from communications theory.

Shannon and Weaver (1949) proposed a model of a communication system to help with an overall view of telephonic signal transmission (Figure 1). A source (speaker) produces a message in the form of sounds, which are encoded as electric signals passing along a wire (channel). Noise is interference in the channel. Signals are decoded by the telephone receiver and the reconstituted message reaches its destination (hearer).

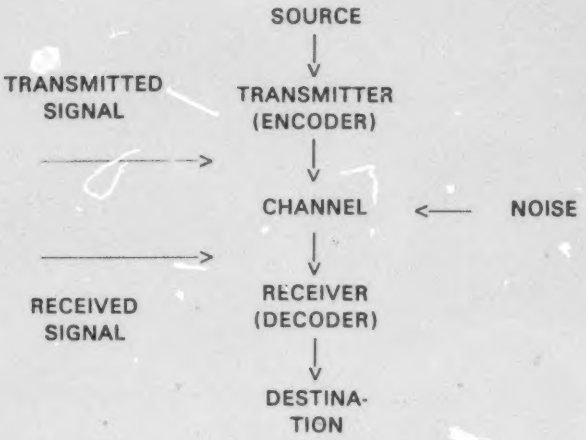

FIGURE 1.

A GENERAL COMMUNICATION SYSTEM (after Shannon and Weaver, 1949)

Shannon and Weaver's model was soon applied in areas other than communication engineering, and in particular has been adapted as a model for language communication between people. Figure 2 shows a language communication model proposed by Anderson (1969).

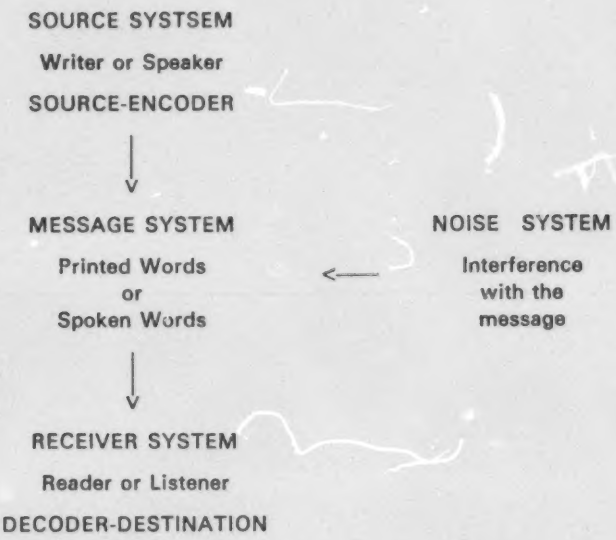

FIGURE 2

LANGUAGE COMMUNICATION MODEL (after Anderson, 1969)

Anderson's model sees the origination and reception of messages as encoding-decoding functions in transmitting information. A writer (source-encoder) encodes his thought and produces a written message. The noise can be any kind of interference with the message. When the message is received by the reader, it must be decoded, i.e., the reader must attempt to derive from it the meaning intended by the writer. For this to happen there must be a community of experience between writer and reader. They must associate the same meanings with the signals used.

It is at this point that the model is useful to us in considering reading English as a second language. As far as the migrant is concerned, three aspects of the model are important.

- First, the message system. Does the migrant know the code being used, i.e., does he understand the language, its sounds, vocabulary and syntax? Also, is he familiar with the way in which the code is recorded, i.e., is he familiar with the English alphabet and spelling system?

- Second, the noise system. Can the non-native reader, for example, cope with interference from his own language by way of its sound system or grammatical structure?
- Third, the encoding-decoding correspondence. Is there a sufficiently broad community of experience for the non-native reader to decode from the message the same information encoded by the writer? Is the reader sufficiently familiar with the second culture to be aware of culture-bound aspects of the language?

The specific difficulties of the non-native speaker trying to read English can be seen in perspective by reference to the model. And we as teachers may find help in developing techniques to cope with his difficulties if we see how all those difficulties interact in the communication process. I intend therefore to look at a summary of the difficulties of the non-native reader as seen by Modiano (1973) and then to see how they fit together by reference to the model.

Difficulties of the Non-native Reader

Phonic Approach

Modiano (1973) looks at the task that faces the non-native reader in the classroom. Imagine first that the teacher uses the phonic approach. This assumes that, in order merely to read words aloud, the migrant must be able to

1. distinguish all the sounds of English,
2. recognize all the letter shapes,
3. associate each sound with a letter or combination of letters, and
4. scan the page in a left-to-right, top-to-bottom sequence.

There is, however, no guarantee that a migrant child will be able to do all or any of these basic things.

First, as far as the sounds are concerned, every language has its own patterns of sound contrasts and no two languages are the same. Linguists are aware of this, but most reading teachers are not. Speakers of Romance languages will not be able to hear the difference between the vowel sounds of "ship" and "sheep". Speakers of Hindi will interpret the k of "kin" as being different to the k of "skin". Speakers of Greek will confuse the pronunciation of "day" and "die". The reason is that through long years of practice we all tend to interpret the sounds of other languages in the same way as we interpret those of our own. Teachers should therefore become aware of the different phonemic (sound) structures of the languages of their students. See Greenberg (1968) and Ervin-Tripp (1970) for surveys in this area.

Second, although the Roman alphabet is the most common in the world, a large proportion of our migrants learn to read with another alphabet or writing system. Russians and some Europeans may be used to the cyrillic alphabet in which "P" is sounded as our "R" and "C" as our "S", for example. Greeks have another alphabet, Chinese have pictographic characters, Japanese have a syllabary, Arabic speakers another different system.

Third, no other language employs the same sound-symbol correspondences as English. Some are much more regular in their spelling system, others less so. But whatever the case, people who already read another language will automatically read English script with the sound-symbol relationship of their own language.

Fourth, while most people will scan a page of print left-to-right and top-to-bottom, in many cases teachers will not be able to make that assumption and will have to teach our normal scanning sequences.

Finally, imagine the difficulty facing a child if the explanations offered by the reading teacher are in a language he does not understand. Modiano points out that instruction at this stage can occur only at the "grunt and point" level.

But what if a child, even under all these difficulties, does learn by rote to 'bark at words'. There is much evidence to show that people perceive and remember only what is meaningful (Piaget, 1969; Smith and Dechant, 1961). What then is the point of phonic reading instruction at a stage where the migrant does not speak the language?

Whole-Word Approach

If the phonic approach is fraught with difficulty, does the non-native fare any better with a whole-word method? The answer is no. Even if he does learn to recognize whole words and manage to recall their sound pattern, if he does not speak the language he is no better off. And his ability to understand the teacher's instruction is likewise minimal with a whole-word method.

If reading is going to be any more than 'barking at words', then the child must speak the language first. To speak it he must have prolonged contact with the language in ordinary situations at school, at play and preferably also at home. The longer the process of learning to speak takes, the greater the chance of negative motivation through reading failure at school.

Higher Level Skills

Having surveyed the difficulties inherent in the phonic and whole-word approaches to beginning reading for non-natives, Modiano turns her attention to higher level skills by examining foreign language interference in comprehension.

She cites a quite large body of research, suggesting that comprehension is influenced by two major factors. The first, accounting for about half of the variance, is knowledge of vocabulary. The second factor is not easy to identify unequivocally, but seems to be closely related to verbal reasoning and knowledge of grammatical structure.

It has long been obvious to language teachers, even without hard-line research, that knowledge of vocabulary is a key factor in reading. For hundreds of years teachers have urged students to extend their vocabulary and anyone with a limited vocabulary is at an obvious disadvantage in reading.

The second factor related to grammatical structure has been seen by a number of recent studies reported in Modiano (1973) to provide valuable cues in the reading process. Stewart (1969) even attributes the reading failures of many negro readers to lack of mastery of standard English syntax. Most foreign language teachers are also aware of the difficulties faced by students without an adequate knowledge of the way in which grammatical structure signals meaning.

These two factors have been described by the linguist, Fries (1963), in identifying three layers of meaning in language. The first two were the lexical (or vocabulary) meanings, and the structural (or grammatical) meanings. In addition he noted a layer of sociocultural meanings arising from a common sociocultural experience.

All these factors seem to militate against the success of the non-native speaker in reading. Lack of extensive vocabulary hampers his comprehension of key concepts. Ignorance of structural signals prevents the grasping of relationships cued by grammatical means. Lack of an understanding of the sociocultural background precipitates many misunderstandings.

The result is in most readers a large credit balance in frustration and failure, a large debit balance in satisfaction and success. Early and continued failure at reading is a strong negative motivator that has ensured that thousands of migrant children in Australia have never realized their potential.

Deficits and Interference

If we refer back to the language communication model, we can see how all the difficulties faced by non-native speakers interact in hampering reading.

First, there are certain deficits. If we consider the message system separately, it has a certain number of components. These are the sounds of the language, the symbols by which these are recorded in writing and above all the internal structure of the language by which

meanings and relationships are signalled. The non-native reader suffers deficits in all these areas, and the smaller is his mastery of the language the greater are his difficulties.

Second, there is the problem of interference. This is the noise component of the model. Every aspect of the message system of English has some kind of corresponding aspect in other languages. Some of the correspondences are quite close, but some features are remarkably different and the interferences can be great.

I have already mentioned the sound system of languages and how we tend to interpret the sounds of all languages in the same way as we interpret those of our native tongue. This is not just a matter of using sound quality to differentiate meaning. In many languages the pattern of stress and intonation serve to signal differences in meaning. In tonal languages the same word said at four different pitches could mean four different things. Such people learning English have difficulty using intonation to signal questions rather than the meaning of individual words. The difficulty is further compounded by the fact that in ordinary writing and printing we have no way of indicating patterns of tonation and stress.

There is interference too from the written signal system for many people. If he is used to one spelling system, say French, the reader will already habitually associate certain sounds with certain letter combinations. He will, for instance, associate sounds similar to the English word "air" with the letters *er*, while we commonly read them to rhyme with "fur". The French reader through years of practice will regard *ent* on the ends of verbs as silent letters. This is not much help when he tries to read "went", "invent" and so on.

A much more significant interference will come from the structural pattern of the language code. There are many languages, like Turkish and Japanese for example, in which word order is so different that speakers of those languages have the greatest difficulty in interpreting the sequences of English.

Finally, we must consider the whole encoding-decoding process. Even if we assume that the non-native speaker overcomes the difficulties with sound, symbol and internal structure of the code, can we be sure that he will decode from the message the same content as the writer encoded? Language is a culture-based conventional code. For communication we have to rely on a community of experience among users of the language to ensure comprehension. Unfortunately we cannot assume that people from another culture will have that community of experience that we take for granted in other speakers of English.

Strategies for Teaching Reading

There appear to be two basic strategies for avoiding the frustration and despair flowing from deficits and interference. I will mention these briefly.

In the Americas there has been a marked move to avoid both deficit and interference by teaching people to read first in their native language. This means that in the beginning stages the reader does not have to cope with learning to read a language with which he is not familiar. Also there is no question of interference from a language with which one is more at home.

Modiano reports two projects in which the native language of the group was accorded equal status with the official language. Reading was taught first in the native tongue. Orata (1953) reported that schools had much more influence on homes when the children were enrolled in a programme that gave status to the native language as well as English. Modiano (1968) reported that literacy levels were much higher in communities where the schools offered bilingual programmes and taught reading in native tongues than in communities where all instruction was in Spanish. The results seem to indicate that people who first read competently in their own language have less trouble when they later come to read another language.

There is evidence in Australia that this kind of programme is gaining support. Rado (1974) reports a conference on bilingual education at Latrobe University. In some Melbourne schools there is a well-developed programme for fostering literacy in migrant languages before teaching English. The policy and research branch of the Schools Commission is advocating such practices and the federal government has appointed a committee to investigate the teaching of migrant languages in schools.

There is also evidence from other countries that a bilingual approach with early reading in the native language is successful. There are bilingual programmes in Wales and Canada, for example.

The second strategy is one that tries to overcome the difficulties by postponing reading instruction until the learners have at least a basic command of English. Alternatively, if reading is not postponed, the material used is strictly controlled to make sure that what is read has been introduced in oral language lessons previously. This kind of approach is very demanding on the teacher, who finds himself writing all the material to be used in the reading lesson. Nevertheless the approach, which is basically an experience-based approach to reading, does ensure that the child attempts to read only material with which he is already familiar and which is based on his own experience. In

this way the teacher is ensuring the community of experience necessary to avoid culture-based misunderstandings.

Which of these basic strategies is to be accepted in Australia must be decided by individual teachers. There is official pressure to opt for the native language first. We may achieve this in time, but there are huge problems in finding sufficient bilingual teachers alone, not to mention administrative and logistic difficulties. Meanwhile the alternative method requires a specialist background in contrastive linguistics, sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics in order to sort out the problem of interference.

Nevertheless, the increasing awareness of the problem among teachers indicates a thoroughly professional concern for the needs of a significant number of children in the schools. Perhaps we can help to evolve an effective strategy.

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THE QUESTION OF SPELLING 12

Charles C. Cripps

As teachers it would seem that the time is right to question spelling. In England many teachers are very concerned about spelling. This appears to be equally true for the majority of Australian teachers. There is a growing awareness regarding spelling.

Unfortunately, teachers are not really quite sure how to handle the problems facing them. Furthermore, there are the pressures placed on teachers from parents, and the press is continually suggesting a decline in standards. The questions seem to revolve around the role of the teacher. Should she be directive or should she be complacent? In other words, should she be teaching tools, or should she just be encouraging children to discover things? This suggestion worries many of our perceptive teachers as they are aware that some children appear to be quite happy discovering nothing. These teachers would prefer the 'discovery' to be guided. In all probability these are the very teachers who are concerned about spelling.

We have often heard colleagues discussing certain children and reporting on their high level of ability in talking and reading, but commenting with despair on their complete inability to write anything down. These children simply cannot spell. In addition, these teachers now have the added problem of deciding the place for spelling in the curriculum.

Before endeavouring to make a case for good spelling one should point to some of the dangers of good spelling. This may seem to be a contradiction of terms, nevertheless, it is important to be aware of the possible damage done by some parents. It is quite understandable that parents tend to regard their children as an extension of themselves and in so doing look upon their child's ability to read and write in a very personal way. Any inadequacy reflects on them, and they seem to display a morbid desire for detail. Take the example of the child writing a letter to a friend and on showing the copy to his parent is told that he cannot possibly send such a letter. It may in fact only have one or two deviations, such as 'suger for sugar' or 'stoped for stopped'.

This child soon begins to lose confidence in his spelling ability, and such remarks confirm the notion that he is a poor speller. His

self-image is lowered. The whole concept of self-image is highly relevant to spelling. It is certainly one of the problems when teaching older junior and secondary children. They believe they cannot spell. They will often tell you that they are 'rotten spellers'. It is also true with the adults who are coming forward as a result of the Literacy Campaign in England. The task of encouraging these people to believe they are 'good spellers' is half the battle.

If one is to make a case for good spelling, then it would seem logical to suggest that its main purpose would be that of communication. If spelling is poor, then either the reader cannot understand the message, or he receives the incorrect message. The question of courtesy is also valid. When the telephone is used for communication purposes, the sender of the message speaks clearly. He wants his message understood. A further reason for good spelling is the question of habit formation. It would seem reasonable to suggest that children can develop a habit of care which in turn may lead to some transfer of training to other aspects of language.

At this stage, it would be worthwhile discussing spelling in the light of creative or personal writing. Teachers are divided in this argument. There are those who encourage children to write vividly and excitingly and not to be concerned about the spelling. They justify this approach by suggesting that, if the children are worried about spelling, then this unnecessary concern will inhibit the flow. On the other hand, there are teachers who argue that spelling does matter. It would appear that they have the stronger argument in that they believe that many children operate in a similar manner as most adults.

When adults are writing and wish to use an unfamiliar word from their language repertoire, and they are unsure of the spelling, then, as some would say, they circumnavigate the unfamiliar word and use another in its place. The substitute word, in all probability, will be less precise, less vivid, and less exciting. In other words, if children are freed from this 'spelling failure' image and have been taught to spell, then there are strong indications that their creative efforts will be up to the expectations of the first group of teachers in terms of vivid and exciting writing. Peters (1967) suggests that competent spellers are confident spellers. Surely the reverse of this would be equally true. Confident spellers are competent spellers.

If one asks teachers the reasons for neglecting spelling, the reply is very often connected with the notion that children learn to spell simply by learning to read. These teachers believe that the relationship is like a coin, that is, reading is on one side and, if one turns the coin over, spelling is on the other. Unfortunately, this is just not true,

because what is not clear to these teachers is that spelling is quite a different skill from reading.

Spelling is not 'caught' via reading because spelling is not 'taught' in the same way.

If reading is viewed in the light of Goodman's (1969) work, one sees that competent readers are making use of language cues in such a way that the whole process is one of prediction and anticipation. In other words, their reading is more efficient because they have the ability to draw on the syntactic and semantic cues offered in the passage. Competent readers expect certain words to appear and there is no need for them to consciously look at every single letter. For example, if the reader, through context is expecting a certain day of the week and the letter *W* appears, he would in all probability draw on his previous knowledge and linguistic competence and read *Wednesday* because this is the only day of the week beginning with *W*. The only time the reader is required to consciously study the structure of a word is when he meets a new or unfamiliar word. The reader then isolates the elements and attacks the word by bringing to it his knowledge and application of phonics.

Spelling would seem to be this kind of a skill, however, there are differences. Reading is a skill that permits successive approximations to the word being read before commitment, while spelling is more permanent. Once written it is written.

In reading discriminatory skills coincide with understanding. In spelling the understanding of a word or phrase necessarily precedes the writing of it.

The research work of Peters (1970) makes a clear distinction between spelling and reading ability. She cites the finding, based on nearly 1,000 ten year old children, to spell the word *saucer* when given in a dictation passage. The results showed that only 48 per cent were able to write *saucer* correctly. In addition, it was interesting to note that the 52 per cent who were unable to write *saucer* offered between them 209 alternative spellings. These attempts spread along a continuum from what one might term acceptable alternatives such as *sauser* or *sorser* to the unclassified variety such as *spienace* and *sye*.

If the same word were offered to eight year olds to read, then 71 per cent of them would, according to the norms, read it correctly. Evidence of this is the position of the word *saucer* on Schonell's Graded Word Reading Test. Furthermore, this is a word-recognition test where the word is divorced from the context. The explanation is that in reading the child is able to isolate the elements and bring his phonic skills into operation. In other words, reading is from the

unknown to the known. Spelling, on the other hand, is from the known to the unknown.

The problem which faces the teacher is how is she going to make the unknown known. If cues are given, they are given through the sound. Unfortunately, an attack through the sound of the word brings difficulties in that there are often a number of alternative spellings given to a known meaningful sound. For example, the sound *or* in English can be written as *o* (glory), *or* (horse), *aw* (saw), *oo* (door), *ou* (pour), *ough* (bought), *augh* (caught), *hau* (exhaust), and there are many more one may add to this list. It would, therefore, be very unwise to rely solely on auditory skills for the teaching of spelling. Teachers who give instruction entirely through the auditory modality will, in all probability, create havoc in their classrooms. It would be safe if English were grapho-phonemically regular, that is the one spelling for the one sound. Even our phonemically regular words could have reasonable alternatives. For example, *played* could reasonably be written as *plade* or *plaid*.

If one wrote *allso* and *also* on a blackboard, how would competent spellers know which was written correctly? The answer is given in the fact that they can 'see' the correct word. Sight is our preferred sense. We use sight to check the correctness or incorrectness of our spelling. In other words, spelling is a visual and not an auditory skill.

The teacher of spelling must also be aware that there is a structure in words, that is, certain letters follow certain letters. The suggestion here is that, if children are made familiar with this coding system, then the teacher is well on the way to solving the spelling problem. Quite clearly children of seven and eight years are in a position to be aware that English spelling is structurally predictable.

Wallach (1963) investigated this coding system with eleven year old good and poor spellers, by using briefly exposed flash cards. Some cards bore groups of letters very similar to English words, e.g., TERVIC or EPIDOL. Other cards had random strings of six letters, e.g., DNEHPS or GYDNML. The results revealed that the good and poor spellers were unable to recognize the words bearing no resemblance to English, but the good spellers were able to spell more readily than the poor spellers the nonsense words resembling English. In other words, the good spellers had learned a general coding system based on the possibilities of certain letters appearing in certain sequences in English, and these they had learned visually.

Visual experience is vital to spelling and it would seem reasonable to suggest that children will obtain this experience through reading. It has, however, already been argued that spelling is not 'caught' via reading. Nisbet (1941) states that children are likely to

'catch' only about 4 per cent of the words they read. One wonders how many teachers endeavour to reassure anxious parents by suggesting to them that they need not be so worried about spelling difficulties now that their child's reading has improved!

If we cannot rely on reading alone, then spelling must be taught. Nevertheless, some children seem to spell quite naturally. They do, in fact, 'catch' spelling. These favoured children bring with them certain abilities. First, these children have a very good verbal ability. They are familiar with words, their structure and their use. They are surrounded by language.

Second, they demonstrate a very good level of visual perception of word forms. These children recognize common letter sequences. They are able to see words within words. For example, they see *tea*, *each* and *her* in 'teacher'; some have even seen *ache*.

Finally, these children are favoured in terms of perceptuo-motor ability. They produce with speed, well-formed, legible handwriting.

These attributes are in fact predictors of spelling competence. Peters (1975) suggests that a child demonstrating any two is likely to be a good speller. Furthermore, she suggests teachers should be looking at spelling in this light rather than testing normatively.

It is also clear that those who are ill-favoured in these respects will progress in spelling provided they are given 'good teaching'. That is, there is time spent on instruction, which includes the pointing out of the internal structure of words, for spelling must be taught rationally and systematically. This approach is obviously quite different from the traditional lists and rote learning techniques usually associated with the teaching of spelling.

Apart from talk, being read to, and reading, all of which in some degree encourage an interest in word form, the essential elements to be taught are:

1. An awareness of common letter sequences and the probabilities of these occurring. This may be approached through sets of words. It is important to note here the difference between words treated in this manner in the teaching of reading and spelling skills. In reading, a set of words such as *could*, *would* and *should* would be treated as a unit. In other words, in phonic generalisation, the words are grouped according to *sound* and *spelling*, that is, the same sound links with the same spelling. On the other hand, when spelling is being taught, not only should the list include these words but also *shoulder*, *boulder*, *smoulder* and any other words containing the *ould* structure.
2. The increase in span of apprehension of letter sequences is also important. This necessarily involves the use of imagery. Imagery

is highly relevant to the teaching of spelling. The child may part-perceive a word and then be held up. At this stage the teacher must ask why the child has failed to reproduce a clear image. The reason is probably due to the fact that, in earlier perception of the word, attention was not directed to the 'difficult spot' in the word. The solution would seem to be a discussion related to the relevant letter string and structure of the word.

3. Certainty and carefulness of the formation of letters in writing is very important. Care in writing does affect spelling and, surprisingly, the careful writer tends to be the swift writer and swift handwriting greatly influences spelling ability. A continuous flow is essential. It could be argued that children should be instructed in a 'linked script' in the early years rather than printing. In other words, they are encouraged to write using an economy of strokes.

   Children with swift motor control write groups of letters in connected form, sparked off by a phoneme, for example the *ough* spelling. This would suggest practice in swift writing of words. The danger, of course, is to prevent letter-by-letter copying.
4. It is most advisable that, when children are learning new words, they develop a look-cover-write-check routine. In other words, they look carefully at the word, endeavour to memorize it, and then make an attempt to reproduce the whole word. If after checking, the attempt is a variance with the original, then the whole procedure is repeated again. This technique will prevent letter-by-letter copying.
5. For some children it may be necessary to adopt a multi-sensory backing of the kind advocated by (Fernald 1943). This finger-tracing technique is making the best use of all sensory inroads.
6. The question of spelling lists is an interesting one. If lists are of any value, then it is the kind of list which is valuable. Peters (1970), cites evidence that, if lists are derived from children's needs (that is, either words which the children ask for in the course of their writing or lists of the kinds of words that children ask for), there is significantly greater progress than from printed lists or no lists at all. If teachers are relying on published lists, it seems advisable to consider the construction of such lists. Most lists are ordered alphabetically, and this usually prevents the teacher presenting words according to similar structure, as shown in the *ould* example *(could should would)*. Teachers must evaluate the use of published lists in the light of a rational and systematic approach to spelling.
7. Encourage children to ask for words they find difficult. These

they should learn by the look-cover-write-check technique, with the intention of reproducing them in the course of free writing.

8. The child should not sound or spell out the word letter by letter. Instead, he should write it from memory, saying the word slowly as he writes.
9. If competent spellers implicitly associate structurally similar words (courte*ous* — beaute*ous*), it would seem reasonable to point out to children the relationship between an easy known word and the unknown difficult word. For example 'conscience' may be taught via 'science', 'shoulder' via 'should', and 'heard' via 'hear' and 'ear'. The use of mnemonics may also act as an indicator for some children. "The child would be an 'ass' to spell 'occasionally' with double ss".
10. Spelling rules may be of some value for some children. The teacher must, however, be aware that some rules are more complex that the word itself.
11. The value of dictation has been a topic of debate in many school staff rooms. Dictation has usually fallen into two categories, the unseen passage and the prepared passage. Some teachers can justify either or both kinds. Dictation would, however, seem to of more value if taken a stage further. The suggestion is to dictate unseen, a passage for the children to write. They are then given a period of time to check and correct any words they 'think' are incorrectly written. They would be encouraged to enlist help from a variety of sources, such as dictionaries, parents, other adults or children. If the children work honestly, the teacher gains an insight into two kinds of errors. First, she is aware of the words for which the child required help. Second, and probably of greater importance, the teacher is able to note the words the child 'thinks' he knows because he does not correct these in his final copy.

If developed systematically, this self-correcting kind of dictation could be if immense value in many classrooms.

Conclusion

This paper has been an attempt to examine the spelling skill and its relationship to reading. It has attempted to demonstrate the need for the teacher to look at how the child spells and to use this information remedially. Finally, this paper describes the role of the teacher and points to the fact that it is the teacher who determines whether the child will be a good speller.

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CHILDREN'S LITERATURE AND READING MATERIALS

13

J. A. Richardson
Susan M. Howard

The Bullock Report asserts (T.E.S. 6.1)* that "one of the most important tasks facing the teacher of older junior and younger secondary school pupils is to increase the amount and range of their voluntary reading attainments". At present it seems that schools in the U.K. are failing in this task. There is a fairly large group of pupils in secondary schools, the Report asserts, who have mastered the decoding skills and can read but who have little or no interest in the activity and do not read books outside school. Even more dramatic is a point made earlier in the Report but which seems directly related to the school's failure to inspire many children with an interest in reading — that as many as one third of the population may be incompetent in the kind of reading comprehension needed for everyday life (T.E.S. 4.2).

Is the situation similar in South Australia? As far as we know there is no direct research evidence. However, general observation and teacher reports suggest that it is, that a substantial proportion of our children in the later primary and secondary school years are 'reluctant readers'. One of the writers, in an unpublished paper, expressed it in this way:

> Through observation and discussion with children and students I have become increasingly aware of the problem of the reluctant reader — children on self-imposed hunger strikes in the midst of literary plenty. For these children, who appear to be neither physically nor intellectually handicapped, reading is a chore which is to be endured at times, and avoided whenever possible for it is rarely a pleasurable experience.

Is this an overstatement or does the reader's experience bear it out? Perhaps, in any case, it doesn't really matter. There are a number of well-known and influential writers who do not see the virtues of universal literacy, which most of us assume. Here is Paul Goodman (1964):

* Report references are to the Summary of the Report in the *Times Educational Supplement*, 21/2/75 (Summary page and column given).

In my opinion, there is something phoney here. For a change, let us look at this 'reading' coldly and ask if it is really such a big deal except precisely in the school that is supposed to teach it and is sometimes failing to do so.

With the movies, TV and radio that the illiterate also share, there is certainly no lack of 'communications'. We cannot say that the reading-matter of the great majority is in any way superior to the content of these other media. And in the present stage of technology and economy, it is probably *less* true than it was in the late nineteenth century — the time of the great push to universal literacy and arithmetic — that the mass teaching of reading is indispensable to operate the production and clerical system. It is rather our kind of urbanism, politics and buying and selling that require literacy. These are not excellent.

Perhaps in the present dispensation we should be as well off if it were socially acceptable for large numbers not to read. It would be harder to regiment people if they were not so well 'informed'; as Norbert Wiener used to point out, every repetition of a cliche only increases the noise and *prevents* communication. With less literacy, there would be more folk culture. Much suffering of inferiority would be avoided if youngsters did not have to meet a perhaps unnecessary standard. Serious letters could only benefit if society were less swamped by trash, lies and bland verbiage. Most important of all, *more* people might become genuinely literate if it were understood that reading is not a matter of course but a special useful art with a proper subject-matter, imagination and truth, rather than a means of communicating top-down decisions and advertising. (Advertising is a typical instance: when the purpose of advertising was to give information — "New shipment of salt fish arrived, very good, foot of Barclay Street" — is was useful to be able to read; when the point of advertising is to create a sythetic demand, it is better not to be able to read). Goodman, 1964, p. 26)

How does one react to this point of view? Perhaps it could be dismissed as lese-majeste at an International Reading Conference? At all events we assume that there is a significant proportion of children in Australian schools who are reluctant readers and that it does constitute an important problem. The interesting question then is: how does it come about? With the wealth and variety of books, materials, aids and facilities which schools now have at their disposal, it does seem remarkable that we fail to motivate a large number of children to want to read beyond the stage of semi-literacy. An immediate defensive reaction is to put the blame on the home, on the counter-attractions of TV, comics etc. There is no need to enlarge upon such factors. Schools and teachers and lecturers in Education have always been very good at locating the motes elsewhere to the neglect of the beams over which they do have control.

A number of such 'beams' is suggested in the Bullock Report. The trouble may start early on in the piece with the language used in early readers.

> Texts either contain too many words and are therefore frustrating or too few and are therefore boring if not downright banal. Either way children cannot use their already well developed linguistic abilities to make light work of reading. (T.E.S. 4.3)

Closely related to language is story content. Quite a lot is known about the average six year old. He tends to show behaviour of an independent nature and strong sex-role identification. He spends more time away from home and is less family-centred, he is curious and eager to know and learn and tends to favour heroism, make-believe and adventure as themes for bed-time reading. And, with what do we present this 'average' child when be begins to read — Nip and Fluff and omnipresent Mother — an inauspicious start to the development of a life-time interest in books and reading.

Obviously content is of crucial significance in the process of learning to read. By teaching a child with material of little interest or by an emphasis on the mechanical aspect of reading, we would seem to be separating process and content, and if the motivational qualities of exciting or moving content are absent, reading may become and remain for the child, just a process — an end in itself. With TV, process need not be taught or learned for the content is to be enjoyed: herein lies the enormous attraction of this medium for children. You do not have to work at learning to watch TV. There is no viewing drill before enjoyment can be gained from the activity.

With reading it is otherwise. Even in our enlightened days we are so concerned that the child progress at the average *rate* (that he perform at the norm for his age group), that he master the allegedly extraordinarily difficult task of decoding, that process is often all that matters, with content a very secondary consideration even if it merits a rating at all. No wonder that many children adopt precisely this viewpoint themselves — and find reading a laborious, tension-accompanied technique, to be mastered to meet the utilitarian demands of an adult world; one which brings no joy, one to be undertaken with reluctance.

Zimet (1972) makes the same point in more restrained terms and draws the obvious inference:

> Reading texts emphasize skill, and reading is taught for the sake of the skill itself. We need to shift our emphasis from "reading to learn to read" to "reading about something meaningful while learning to read". By emphasizing process to the exclusion of meaningful ideas, we sacrifice the raison d'etre for learning to read. (Zimet, 1972, p. 128)

The difficulty arising from this emphasis on process at the expense of content is aggravated if, as frequently happens, "the teaching of reading virtually ceases once the child can read aloud with reasonable accuracy at a reasonable speed" (T.E.S. 4.1).

> The notion that once children have mastered the decoding process they will make their own way is implicit in much classroom procedure. Many schools depend on graded reading schemes and their supplementary readers: children have little experience of good children's literature. Once they are through the scheme, most teachers stop keeping records of children's reading. (T.E.S. 6.1)

There is little doubt that teacher concern (reflecting emphasis in teacher training programmes) tends to concentrate on the decoding skills and that they give comparatively little attention to the 'higher order' reading demands and abilities — selection and evaluation of material, bibliographical skills, ability to evaluate, make inferences, to understand in a deep sense, to become "an active interrogator of the text rather than a passive receiver of words."

If this is indeed the situation, it is not at all surprising that we have the phenomenon of the reluctant reader. There appears to be an emphasis on process without appropriate regard for content up to the age of seven or eight when the majority have mastered the basic techniques of reading and thereafter no systematic guidance or encouragement to move beyond the insipid early primary schools reading materials to the world of literature.

If our comments, supplementing those of the Bullock Report, are not completely wide of the mark, the question of course arises: what should we be doing about it?

As far as the introduction to reading is concerned, there seems little question that books to be read by children must be carefully designed in respect to vocabulary, sentence structure and length (though the degree of control necessary seems to us to be frequently grossly exaggerated). Whether or not such books deal with topics more or less familiar to young children seems beside the point: it is unrealistic to expect they will 'turn on' children with a love of reading for content: this is just not their purpose. Dull and uninspired they may be — but necessary. Or is it necessary? Are we just regurgitating the conventional wisdom?

At any rate the teacher can alleviate the difficulty. Hildick (1970, p. 78) draws an analogy with learning music. Beginners' exercises, he points out, are drab but indispensable. "But — and this is the point not always recognized — in music the learner is usually fed and sustained on a rich diet of good music, far beyond his powers of performance but within his capacity for appreciation. And that is why fiction written to be read to young children is every bit as important as that which is written to be read by them." It is not altogether clear why the fiction referred to should be "*written* to be read to young children". The examples Hildick quotes, Kenneth Graham, *The Wind in the Willows* and Church's *Stories from Homer*, cannot be so cate-

gorized. They are stories of literary excellence written for older children, (and a wide range of older children) which are comprehensible to and appeal to all ages. There are many others available. The main points to be stressed are that such books should be regarded as just as necessary to a beginning reading programme as materials designed to teach children how to read, and that reading to children (and associated discussion and activities) might well claim equal weight in the programme as more conventional introductory reading activities.

In this context also, though not within the main theme of the paper, it is worth stressing again that adverse attitudes to and failure in reading may often result from our obsession with the importance of the skills involved being acquired by a certain age and the anxiety and concern we convey to children if they 'fail' to achieve the expected norms i.e. to our ignoring in practice individual differences in learning.

> Timetables: We act as if children were railroad trains running on a schedule. The railroad man figures that if his train is going to get to Chicago at a certain time, then it must arrive on time at every stop along the route. If it is ten minutes late getting into a station, he begins to worry. In the same way, we say that if children are going to know so much when they go to college, then they have to know this at the end of this grade, and that at the end of that grade. If a child doesn't arrive at one of these intermediate stations when we think he should, we instantly assume that he is going to be late at the finish. But children are not rail road trains. They don't learn at an even rate. They learn in spurts, and the more interested they are in what they are learning, the faster these spurts are likely to be.
>
> Nowhere is our obsession with timetables more needless and foolish than in reading. We made much too much of the difficulties of learning to read. Teachers may say, "But reading must be difficult, or so many children wouldn't have trouble with it". I say that it is *because* we assume that it is so difficult that so many children have trouble with it. Our anxieties, our fears, and the ridiculous things we do to "simplify" what is simple enough already, cause most of the trouble. (Holt, 1972, p. 99)

The point is closely connected with the preceding one: obsession with a timetable for the acquisition of reading almost invariably means concentration on process to the neglect of content.

It is on this score also that criticism is often levelled at the reading fare provided for children who have mastered the basic decoding skills and are able to read independently provided the vocabulary and syntax of the readers is not too complex and the content is not too esoteric. Many schools, according to the Bullock Report (T.E.S. 6.1) "depend on graded reading schemes and supplementary readers" containing material of an insipid kind, quantitatively not much

different from the stuff provided earlier; "they are given little experience of good children's literature". So, the argument sometimes continues, if we pap-feed our pupils, if the reading diet is of little lasting substance, small wonder that children turn from books to other media with more immediate graphic appeal to their attention and interest.

The message of the Bullock Report in this context is not altogether clear. We can accept without reservation its emphasis on one of the main purposes of the reading programme in the later primary years: to give pupils a "source of pleasure and personal development that will continue to be rewarding throughout life" (T.E.S. 5.2). We can agree too that more attention than at present should be given both to reading for learning skills and also to reading for understanding at a deeper level than the literal (though whether these extensions of reading abilities are best achieved in specifically time-tabled periods or, as the Committee believes, in connection with other curriculum areas, is open to question). It is further clear that the Report is in favour of introducing children to and giving them an appreciation of literature, hopefully a lasting appreciation. What is not clear is the Committee's view of what constitutes literature as opposed to reading material which does not merit this title.

Which brings up the contentious questions of what is good (the adjective is implicit) children's literature and, supposing we can reach some consensus on this, whether we should insist that our pupils be exposed only or mainly to it. The questions are raised not only because the topic of the paper seems to require it (!) but also because we feel that quality is important in children's reading (in the context of the problem posed at the outset) even though the constituents of quality are elusive and hard to define.

No attempt is made here to examine these questions in depth. Suffice here to quote, out of the many definitions we have examined, one by Rosenheim (1969) which seems to summarize fairly succinctly what many others have said rather less lyrically.

> We do not bother inordinately with questions such as, "Is this a great book?" Or a wholesome one . . . or an up-to-date one . . . The questions I ask would tend to be: Will this book call into play my child's imagination? Will it invite the exercise of genuine compassion or humour, or even irony? Will it exploit his capacity for being curious? Will its language challenge his awareness of rhythms and structures? Will its characters and events call for — and even strengthen — his understanding of human motives and circumstances, of causes and effects? And will it provide him with a joy that is in some part the joy of achievement, of understanding, of triumphant encounter with the new?
>
> No topic is intrinsically more worthwhile than another: no topic is

intrinsically a guarantee of, or a bar to, the sort of satisfactions I have mentioned . . .

Effective imaginative literature is an amalgam of the new — the strange — what taxes credulity and complacency — with what is somehow believable, authentic or immediate . . . Awareness of motifs or archetypes suggests that the recognizable to which we respond is not necessarily a matter of times, places and institutions but of the basic needs we feel, questions we ask, answers we find — of the instinctive, universal challenge of the journey, tension of the conflict, the covert wish that magic mingle with reality, the complex drives of affection, the complex fear of death. (Rosenheim, 1969, pp. 25-6)

It's stirring stuff, isn't it? Would you argue with the points Rosenheim makes? We find it an excellent description of the major criteria of good literature — not just good children's literature. But are children necessarily motivated to read for themselves by works of quality? As you are well aware, the answer is 'no'. All our experience indicates that children are just as frequently turned on to reading by what Hildick refers to as "Blytonian" reading material — more frequently as the latter is easier to read and less demanding.

It is perhaps worth quoting Hildick further:

Pockets of shrewdness (he writes in his discussion of the Enid Blyton 'classics'), an awareness of the elementary needs of children of this age in the way of length and subject matter, and a remarkable, probably quite unconscious knack of identifying with them in some of their more primitive if least pleasant urges — these are the qualities we are bound to respect in such books. But their deficiencies are equally considerable. They lack density. There is no fixing in time or space, no richness of circumstantiality. The sea could be any sea or no sea at all. The Five could be anywhere or nowhere. Even worse, apart from the collective personality . . . the children are characterless, the only real differentiation made between them being in size or age or sex. (Hildick, 1970 p. 89)

Is it possible to debar the banal and trivial from our school libraries and from the reading materials we provide in our classrooms? If not, the problem is to lead our children on from Enid Blyton and Biggles to *The Wind in the Willows*, *Dr. Doolittle* and *The Hobbit*. How do we do this? We don't appear to have been conspicuously successful so far. Or does it matter, provided that as adults they can read the headlines and the bold print and the many adult equivalents of Enid Blyton?

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CHILDREN'S LITERATURE AND THE PRE-SCHOOL CHILD

14

Barbara Edmonds

I once heard a customer in a bookshop ask the assistant for a book of poetry. On being asked what particular poet she wished to peruse, she said that it didn't really matter; the important thing was the colour of the volume, as she had a new carpet and wished to match it. Whereupon the ever resourceful assistant took down magenta Miltons and burgundy Brownings and other suitably toned poets. While this is undoubtedly comical it has, I think, a message for any of us who present literature to children and perhaps particularly to those who are concerned with pre-school children, for here it all begins. Attitudes are formed one way or another. The woman buying the book respected poetry, obviously thought there was 'something in it' but certainly didn't read it. Perhaps if boredom had not discouraged her at one stage or another, she might have been able to agree with Dryden that "Poetry is delight".

At the pre-school stage, children should surely find delight and satisfaction in their literature. If they do, it seems likely that they will find it a continuing interest, one way or another. Not everyone will value literacy for the same reason of course. However, it is not simply in the hope that they will read later that we provide literary experiences for young children. Just as we develop ideas and interests by going to films and reading novels and poetry and books which inform, young children can grow intellectually and emotionally on the stories and books and verse we provide for them. If this literature is to be relevant and enjoyable to them, it must be both within their range of understanding and at the same time lively and interesting.

In choosing and presenting literature to young children we begin with a decided advantage, for it is during the pre-school years that a rapid development of language is most likely to occur. Walter de la Mare observed, "Young children hunger after words as they do after lollipops". Words help to clarify their world for them and, as they are at the centre of their world, they like to hear about themselves.

Indeed the first stories they enjoy are often an accompaniment to an activity, such as putting on their shoes. They like also to hear what has happened to them and what is going to happen. A two-year old

going into hospital was told that she would probably have an egg for her tea. She heard this 'story' several times. Finally when approaching the hospital and seeing smoke coming from the great chimney stack which provided power for the complex organisation she said, "They are cooking my egg". Young children are egocentric. Ben at three had advanced beyond the stage of wanting to hear directly about himself. Being shown a book about a boy called Ben he said, "I like that story. That's my name. I dig like that". His teacher asked him, "Is your spade like that?" thus making him think further. For children of four and five the world is extending considerably but they, too, like to hear about their own activities. Children who had been taken to see some pigeons were absorbed in a home made book which described their visit in words and drawings. Later, Eleanor Farjeon's poem "Mrs. Peck Pigeon" was presented to them.

It is of course not possible nor at all desirable that all literature for young children should be concerned with actual experiences. It seems to me, however, that the books and stories and verse should be basically associated with familiar matters — planes, birthdays, animals, grandmothers, earth movers and of course, other children, and, as in the case of the pigeons, ideas developed from these subjects.

This is not to imply that stories about familiar matters have to be factual and cannot be developed imaginatively. On the contrary, young children welcome imaginative stories, for a further characteristic of their stage of development is that they enjoy imaginative play. However, these stories should I believe present the real world in an imaginative way rather than an imaginary world in a realistic way.

Young children depend on us to tell them what is real and what is not. While listening to *The Tale of an Enormous Turnip* one child kept asking if it was a real turnip. He was satisfied when the adult said it looked and grew like a real turnip but was very much bigger because it was a 'pretend' story. For this reason, and also because it is better that folk stories should be told in their entirety and not in 'potted' versions, it seems desirable to limit the telling of folk stories to those which are short and relate to a young child's world. "The goats in the turnip field", for example, is about animals and animal behaviour with which they are familiar. It is certainly a flight of the imagination for one bee to chase several goats successfully from the field, but it is within the bounds of possibility and is, incidentally, very acceptable to children who are small in a world of large and powerful adults.

In *Ask Mr. Bear*, by Majorie Flack, the animals are personified in a way which does not confuse. Danny asks various farmyard creatures what he can give his mother for her birthday. It is certainly

a flight of fancy that they reply, but their replies are realistic. The hen suggests an egg, and the goose a feather pillow. The bear tells him to give her a bear hug, which is appropriate, and the phrase does exist in our language.

A realistic story about picking apples from a tree or buying apples from the market can be interesting to children, but so too can an imaginative one such as *The Little Red House* by A. W. Bailey. In this story a boy looks for "A little red house with no doors and no windows but with a beautiful star inside". The boy does find an apple and his mother cuts it across ways to show him the star. This is a satisfactory conclusion which young children need. They may enjoy a little tension and apprehension but their need for security demands an acceptable solution. They like to hear the same story over and over again and find enjoyment in knowing what is going to happen. Comments such as 'I know what is going to happen' or 'I thought you were going to say that' are often made. Enjoyment is heightened, not lessened by being able to anticipate the conclusion. The warmth and security of an adult telling the story is also important to the child's enjoyment.

They will of course be able to follow and, at least partly, to anticipate the conclusion if the story is simple but well constructed. A number of successful stories have a circular construction. Just a few characters involved in one simple plot are characteristic of the best stories. Children of this age have very hazy conceptions of time and space so that a story like *The Ugly Duckling* involving different seasons and places would be too complex. They have too, a short concentration span, so short 'one-sitting' rather than serial stories are appropriate.

Pre-school children like to be active so they enjoy participating. Stories which allow for gesture, such as *The Tale of a Turnip*, stories containing repetitive phrases which take the ear such as,

"Give me back my caps
You monkey you"

in *Caps for Sale*, by S. Esphyr, and refrains, such as

"Hundreds of Cats
Thousands of Cats
Millions and billions and trillions of Cats"

in *Millions of Cats* by Wanda G'ag, and accumulative stories such as *Ask Mr. Bear*, all give opportunities for children to join in and so make the story even more their own.

Thus far I have implied that literature must be appropriate to a child's stage of development in order to be enjoyed. However, very dull stories could be written if that was the only criterion. Literature

for young children may be simple, but it will only be interesting if it is lively and clear, and written without condescension. Such a book is, I think, *Indian Two Feet and his Horse* by Margaret Friskey. It is well worth telling. Indian Two Feet longed for a horse. His father said he could have one if he could find one, so he set out across the prairie. He came across bisons and buffaloes and prairie rabbits, but no horse. At last he went to sleep in front of a cactus. While he was asleep and not searching, a horse came and looked over the cactus and woke him. Here is a simple plot, a progression of looking and not finding, leading to a satisfactory conclusion. Children would probably expect him to find a horse, but the pleasant twist of the horse finding him provides fun as well as satisfaction. Moreover the simple climax is made perfectly clear, not just by the event, nor by the illustration, which precisely mirrors the event, and which they see before Indian Two Feet does, but by the author's words. The punch line is

"He didn't find a horse
but a horse found him",

and, if you are four, you think that is very funny indeed. One four year old was particularly enchanted by it. He chuckled away to himself as he went off to do something else, "He didn't find a horse, but a horse found him". His teacher was sensitive enought to recognize his appreciation and leave it at that. A less wise adult, anxious to have him read, may have tried to point out words to him, for example "horse" which appears twice in the sentence. His interest in books was well aroused, for later in the morning he went back and 'read' the book to himself. That is to say, he interpreted the pictures and remembered some of the phrases.

Another boy, a few months older, found pleasure and satisfaction in a different kind of book. This conversation was recorded:

Child Do you know what made the holes in this wood?
Adult Was it some kind of worm?
Child Do you know what kind?
Adult No, do you?
Child Yes, Toredo worms. This is a bit of one of the piles of the old wharf. They had to take them out and put new ones in because Toredo worms had eaten them into holes under the water. They like to live in holes under the water.
Child Do you know what this is?
Adult Is it wood that has turned to stone?
Child I think that's nearly right. The wood has to be under the ground for hundreds of years and as it rots little grains of sand fall in as little bits of wood rot away. It's called petrified

wood. Feel it. It's smooth.

Adult How do you know so much about it?

Child Miss — didn't know to tell me so she took us to the library to get a book. The first book was no good, so we had to go back and get this one.

One further example of what literature can mean to young children is that of a boy who had not spoken at all at school and appeared to be retarded. He was suddenly aroused from his lethargy by hearing the story of *David and Goliath*. It is suggested that perhaps he felt like David, small and helpless. As young children are able to relieve some of their anxieties and tensions through imaginative play so they may to a certain extent through hearing stories. *Peter's Chair* by Ezra Jack Keats is an imaginative story of how a young child coped, or was helped to cope, with a new supplanting baby in the house. As well, children, particularly middle class children, lead very orderly structured lives, so that it is a relief to them to hear about a dog called Harry who liked to be dirty.

The boy who heard *David and Goliath* saw perhaps a wider world and so was more able to cope with his own. This is not to suggest that *David and Goliath* is merely therapeutic treatment, for my point is that it is a very fine story and that a second-rate one may not have stirred the boy. The second child, the one interested in petrified wood, derived satisfaction from discovering hard facts in a book. *Indian Two Feet* gave pleasure because it was both sufficiently realistic and imaginative to be comprehended. It is, at least partly, a wish-fulfillment story. I think, too, that this child took pleasure, implicitly, in the balance of the sentence. It certainly made it easy for him to remember.

Young children are interested in the sound of words and the pattern of phrases and sentences. A child of three said "chlorophyll" to himself over and over again without knowing what it meant nor wishing to know at that stage. They ponder over meanings. One girl was told that the rainbow was fading, and later that her skirt was fading. She looked most alarmed. Another looked with considerable interest at a man who, it was said, had "lived in his suitcase" for three weeks. A boy eating an apple was told it was a Granny Smith. This amused him and he repeated it several times. Then he heard an adult talking about 'pith' in an orange. He picked up this rhyme. His friend, fired by such inventiveness, made his offering about the orange pips. He said "My brother says 'Hip Hip Hoorray' but I say 'Pip Pip Pooray'. They experiment with rhythms too. As she worked with the clay, a girl chanted:

"I'm going to make a cat
A little cat
A little cat
And here's his tail".

They repeat television ads:

"A Tinker Toy is a good toy
I like a Tinker".

They make their own verse:

"Ants climb trees
Like cats do
And birds don't"

after hearing *The Ant Tree* by Louis Southern. A child of four and a half likened a zebra's name to a Roman centurion's helmet. Such interest provides a very good basis and reason for extending it through poetry.

Pre-school children can appreciate verse which is short and has a strong rhythm and clear rhyme. They like onomatopaeia and alliteration, nonsense syllables, and refrains. Poets writing for young children usually choose everyday subjects, new shoes, yellow ribbons, horses, pancakes, water. That the poem is short and simple and about familiar matters is of course not enough. It must sound interesting and contain interesting imagery. Such a poem is "Cats" by Eleanor Farjeon.

This poem may illustrate a further aspect which is present in worthwhile literature for young children. This is the author's values or point of view. The poet's views on "Cats" appears to be half-admiring, half exasperated, but all tinged with pleasure and good humour at their ways. In the book, *Polly's Oats* the author, Mare Simont, is critical of the showy race horses and admires the plain and humble Polly, but does not spoil the book by pointing out these values directly.

I believe young children understand these attitudes implicitly at least. The author's values then, especially if it is an appreciation of fun as in the folk story *The Teeny Weeny Woman,* should be one of the considerations we make when choosing literature.

Now having said all this I come to Nursery Rhymes which defy many of the dictums I've set but are much loved and are appropriate. They were not of course written for children but they are short, they have clear rhymes, strong and varied rhythms, and a great variety of characters from a jovial Old King Cole to the unfortunate Doctor Foster, many children and animals and much nonsense. They have indeed the very characteristics which children enjoy in poetry. Above all they are full of life and vigour. It doesn't matter to young children who Hector Protector was but his name has an interesting sound;

"Hushabye Baby the cradle is green" may have originally referred to the question of succession to the throne, but children hear its lyrical quality. Dylan Thomas wrote,

> The first poems I knew were nursery rhymes and before I could read them for myself I had come to love just the words of them, the words alone. What they stood for, or symbolized, or meant was of very secondary importance. What mattered was the sound of them on the lips of the remote and incomprehensible grown ups who seemed for some reason, to be living in my world. I loved the shape and shade and size and noise of the words as they hummed strummed and galloped along. (In Scully, 1966)

Young children probably like nursery rhymes for the reasons made lucid by this poet. They enjoy the sound and they enjoy knowing what everyone seems to know. In the B.B.C. TV series *Mother Tongue* a little girl sings "I had a little nut tree" from her book of Nursery Rhymes. Her mother listens with interest and says "We know that one don't we?", and James Britton thoroughly approves.

I have discussed in very general terms the needs of pre-school children but within these years there is of course a wide range of interest and ability. It is, therefore, not enough to buy suitable books and present them at random. For example, young children are not capable of sequential thinking. Therefore, for them, each page must be self contained, whereas older children can handle increasingly difficult sequences. Young children need simple, uncomplicated pictures, but older ones can be offered a variety in illustrations, such as the line drawings in *Ferdinand* by Robert Lawson. As we all know, if children are not allowed to progress, they grow bored and do not progress. There are, for example, many many books showing colours. These are mostly in the form of reference books — red beads, a blue car. I saw a child look at one of these in a perfunctory way, but when he was offered a more imaginative one — *But where is the green parrot?* by Thomas and Wanda Zacharias — he was completely absorbed.

That "the right book (or story or poem) be made available to the right child at the right time" is not an easy precept to follow, but I believe it should be our aim if literature is to be relevant to young children. Finally, and most important of all, it is our attitude which will encourage interest. Such an attitude is exemplified by the mother in *Mother Tongue* who said with appreciation "We know that one don't we?"

Most pre-school children are unable to read in the literal sense, but with our help they can interpret their literature. Broadly speaking this is, I suppose, being literate. If they have interesting literary experiences at their own level and are not hurried into deciphering

words, into 'barking at print' as Dr. Johnson said scathingly, they are likely to want to read in the future.

As I have suggested, the effectiveness of these literary experiences depends largely on the understanding the children have of their own experiences. If pre-school children are able to talk about their familiar world, to ask questions about it, to be amused, to be sympathetic, they will 'read' with understanding and their 'reading' will further increase their understanding.

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THREE R's FOR TECHNICAL TEACHERS: 15
Realistic Reading Resources

Beth Stevenson

The area relating to reading and the use of technical vocabulary encompasses five vocabularies which average or so-called 'normal' people possess; that is, a listening one, a speaking one, a reading one, a writing one, and a thinking one. There is no order as to the importance or the acquisition of these vocabularies in the young adult life, because a concomitant working of two or more of these vocabularies tends to help the individual learner make the technical vocabulary become part of his everyday meaningful language. This paper attempts to emphasize the importance of learning vocabulary, reading and other literacy skills as an affective as well as a cognitive process; and it draws on my personal experience of more than twenty years of teaching.

Why is it important to help the student to develop the different literary skills? The obvious answer is for the purpose of communication, either for communication from print to person or person to print or person to person, using the verbal tool of language. Let us look at our 'now' experience and be 'Realistic' and analytic about the communication process which should or could be going on here.

You are correlating your thinking and listening vocabularies, you might be translating into a note talking or written vocabulary. Just now, I am the sender and you are the receiver because I am the speaker in front of you. You may receive my message differently from the way that I desire you to receive it, because other variables enter the communication process. 'What I am may speak louder than what I say'. The fact that I have a dialect of English different from the majority of you may interefere with the message. You are analyzing my speech, wondering about me. According to your past experiences, you may be reacting to my posture, dress, presentation — linguistic or otherwise. At a recent conference I listened to a brilliant lecturer and I liked him because I agreed with what he said, but I could not keep my attention focused on the context of his lecture because I kept wondering about him and what made him tick. His personal appearance confused me because his hair style, lack of beard or side-

burns and mode of dress typified styles of twenty years ago rather than now.

I agree with Vygotsky (1962) concerning his views on this language-thought relationship. He stated:

> Schematically we may imagine thought and speech as two intersecting circles. In their overlapping parts thought and speech coincide to produce what is called verbal thought. Verbal thought, however, does not by any means include all forms of thought or all forms of speech. There is a vast area of thought that has no direct relation to speech, the thinking manifested in the use of tools belongs in this area as does practical intellect in general.
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> . . . speech structures mastered by the child become the basic structures of his thinking . . . thought development is determined by language, i.e. by the linguistic tools of thought and by the sociocultural experience of the child. Essentially the development of inner speech depends on outside factors . . . the child's intellectual growth is contingent on his mastering the social means of thought that is language.

In looking over these words of Vygotsky, the phrase 'thought that has no direct relation to speech, the thinking manifested in the use of tools' I am reminded of the statement made concerning many students, 'He's good with his hands.' Because some students have had difficulty in expressing their thoughts verbally or have not mastered the mechanics of the skill of writing, teachers have sometimes assumed that these students are dumb; i.e. they lack intelligence. We, as educators, must be careful of such assumptions. An amusing story on such a line is told in Ken Kesey's novel *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* in which Chief Bromden posed as deaf and dumb in the mental institution. It seemed that some people ignored him when he talked in early life; therefore he withdrew and decided to be silent. As teachers, I believe it is our responsibility to help students translate thought into language, both verbal and written. Practical daily tasks, such as the ability to tie shoelaces also demonstrate intelligence. I've seen this activity analyzed step by step in a teacher's workshop, translating a daily activity into a literacy skill. Try it for vocabulary development! Your Realistic Reading Resources are multitudinous!

In being realistic about a situation, one looks at 'the way it is'. An assessment is made of the assets and needs. The first step concerning improvement of reading in technical subjects whether in the sciences or trade areas, should be a self-evaluation of the teacher's skills in knowing how to teach reading. The second step should be an assessment of the pupils' abilities and the third step should be an inventory of the physical and material; that is, where will the reading actually be taking place — in a lecture room, a laboratory or a machine shop? What software (textbooks, dictionaries, references, magazines etc.)

and hardware (cassette players, slide viewers, tchistoscopes, etc.) are available?

What goals are set? Do the students take part in setting the goals toward making themselves more excellent players in the game of life by improving their thinking and literacy skills? In order to improve these skills the students have to improve the use of their language — whether it is English, Hindustani, Greek or Creole.

Too many people are wanting to break disciplines apart, focus on specific areas and neglect other areas. Over emphasis of either phonics or look-say methods without weaving in the meaning and comprehension can cause our players to produce only a poor or mediocre drama. Maybe we should heed the message of Lewis Carroll in *Through the Looking Glass* when he wrote "Take care of the sense and the sounds will take care of themselves". Please don't get me wrong. Word attack skills have to be taught most times. Some very bright children may have caught the skills by exposure or hearing them taught to another. Many adults have no idea where, or when or how they learned to read.

Let's check out the positive, before we try to eliminate the negative. The majority of people, unless deaf and dumb, are 50 per cent literate without instruction. I make a proposition to the Adult Literacy Class that I teach at night. I ask them if this sounds reasonable, "Anything that you can say with understanding, and anything you can hear with understanding, you should be able to read and write". I ask them to think about that. Is it reasonable? And they usually agree that it sounds logical, so from there we begin the battle for total literacy.

The most successful group that I have taught in Australia was my first group of seven men that began last September, one night a week for two hours. Another teacher worked with me so that possible problems in communication that I might have as a migrant would be eliminated. Each evening the men would come prepared to talk to the group for a few minutes and to have their oral contribution tape recorded. They would usually either give a personal anecdote or tell a joke. I would transcribe their language, have the secretary type each one's contribution and give it to them for reading at the next session. The meaning was already there for them so only the decoding was necessary. If word attack skills or syllabification needed to be worked on, what better way than in using their own language?

Many times it is when we impose our set of values on others that resistance comes. Let us think for a few moments on the linguistically foreign environment of school. The language of home is often quite different, the language of the peer group is different, one teacher speaks differently from another, and teachers speak differently to each

other. A poem in that delightful book of children's poems, *The Geranium on the Window Sill Just Died but Teacher you Went Right On?*, expresses it so well:

> You talk funny when you talk to the principal. Or when the teacher next door borrows some paper. And when my mother comes to see you, you talk funny. Why don't you talk to them like you talk to us?

So students have to decipher meanings from talk, and there are so many messages being sent out, that misinterpretation in receiving is easy.

PEANUTS
featuring
"Good ol' CharlieBrown"
by Schulz
THESE TESTS ARE GOING TO DRIVE ME CRAZY...
?
MA'AM, I DON'T REALLY UNDERSTAND THIS THIRD QUESTION...
DO YOU WANT US TO WRITE WHAT WE THINK, OR WHAT WE THINK YOU WANT US TO WRITE?
IF WE TRY TO WRITE WHAT WE THINK YOU WANT US TO WRITE, DOESN'T THAT GET US INTO THIS WHOLE MIND READING THING, AND OPEN A CAN OF WORMS?
I'M NOT REALLY INTO MIND READING MYSELF...I'M NOT SO SURE IT CAN EVEN BE DONE...
OH, I'VE BENT A FEW SPOONS IN MY TIME, BUT IT'S NOT REALLY MY BAG...AW-WW, WE ALL SEEM TO...
YES, MA'AM?
3. George Washington was a good man.
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Roger Shuy makes the following statement:

> Linguistics have argued for the need to see the interrelationship of oral language and reading particularly in terms of the systematic differences between types of oral language (regional, social, stylistic) and now there is reason to believe that written composition may also be a fruitful introduction to reading skills. This attempt at reuniting reading with the other language skills leads to many other interesting areas for serious consideration. Not only must we know a great deal about the language systems of the children whom we plan to make literate but we must also know a great deal about the language of instruction (both that of the teacher and the text), about comprehension of both reading and oral language, and the interrelatedness of the study of language acquisition and concept development.

In the primary schools, there is the talk or language of the basal readers or reading scheme. Does it sound like a real talk? Is it 'Language For Life' as discussed in The Bullock Report? And of course the ultimate in this linguistically foreign environment is that of the textbook in so many of our post primary subjects. Secondary people are becoming aware of the vast discrepancy between students actual reading levels and the readability levels of their textbooks.

In assessing your classroom scene, I would hope that these are two of the first points which you discover. Number one — the approximate reading level of each of your students, and number two the approximate readability levels of your class texts, supplementary texts and hand-out papers. The reading levels of the students may be assessed in several different ways. However, it must be remembered that a reading level in literature for a particular student may be several grade levels higher than the reading level for that same student in science material. Most reading tests use literature or social studies materials for their major items. That is why it is well for the reading resource teacher in the school to be on the achievement testing team and to secure grade placement scores in each subject area for each student at the beginning of the school year. There should be an individual index card for each teacher of every child with his various subject levels designated. However, with regard to estimating readability levels of materials, should you not have a favourite instrument, I would suggest that you experiment with the Fry readability Graph. Before Fry published it in the *Journal of Reading*, April 1968, in workshops I conducted for Science and Social Studies in Florida, we devoted much time to the lengthy process of using the Dale-Chall formula and the Dale list of 3,000 words. Another technique that is rapidly coming into much use for matching students and books is cloze procedure. One of the uses of this technique is to help teachers decide if they want to purchase certain texts for their students.

Knowing these two mechanical, kind of hard, cold facts about the scene and that our students have a reading level span of probably eight grades and that some of our print resources are far beyond the reading level of many of our students and agreeing that language — vocabulary — words are in the tool kit to do this literacy scene, what do we do next? How do we go about developing the language communication skills, particularly of those students who so desperately need them developed? What do we know of their interests, ambitions, self-concepts? It is important for us to know? I believe it is. I don't believe that we can get to first base unless we know our students and, also, that they know us and trust us. I believe that education should

be an educaring process. Too many times we have the problem of the unmotivated, and we don't exactly know why. Daniel Fader, author of *Hooked on Books* and *The Naked Children* tells of the lad, Wentworth, in *The Naked Children*.

> Sure I can read. I have been able to read ever since I can remember. But I ain't never gonna let them know, on account of iff'n I do I'm gonna have to read all that crap they got.

So what do we do? Try the unorthodox? We want to help them to improve their vocabulary, their comprehension, their word attack skills, but *first* we have to get their *attention*. I must share the story of Vernon, the six foot five Form III young man who was only staying in school until leaving age.

Vernon's literacy skills were very limited but his interests in the real life outside school were keen. I was trying to teach this class of juvenile delinquents . . . and one day in total defeat, I decided that it would be a free reading day in the library. I wanted it to be free for me, too. You know teachers are human! I think students don't always realize this. Anyway, Vernon, who never read or did a written assignment was totally engrossed in a magazine. I looked over his shoulder and he was studying a liquor advertisement. I asked him what kind it was and he immediately named Smirnoff Vodka. I asked him if he would mind going through the magazine and copying down the names of all the liquor, beer, wine and ale advertisements. This was intriguing to him, so he immediately and happily went to work.

His mates became inquisitive and wanted to do what Vernon was doing. I made a very secretive affair about it, as to the possibility of my losing my job if the principal discovered what I was allowing them to do. Magazines containing liquor ads had been banned from this library in previous years, so it was somewhat a new deal. The boys began competing to see who had the longest list and when they read their list to me individually I subversively weaved in word attack and syllabification skills. But, after this experience, THEY LET ME IN!

And this is the first secret of successful teaching, I believe. Do the students accept what we are trying to teach? I believe that the first step in communication has to be meaningful. This thing called meaning, understanding, comprehension or thought is so idiosyncratic — in that it resides in a particular individual as a unique function of his experiences and the particular ways in which he has classified those experiences.

So it is with the concepts which emerge as a result of the codifying process. For instance, my concept of the word tea may not be the same as the general Australian concept of tea because my experience of tea has been vastly different from yours.

I knew tea as either hot tea with lemon, or cream, or iced tea only whereas for you 'tea' may be your three course evening meal! There are so many multiple meanings. Meaning, then, is in people, not in words, phrases or sentences.

My closing thought would be this! If teachers enjoy school, students enjoy school and learning takes place. The worth of the individual is supreme. The black boy who wrote to his former Reading teacher from Vietnam after she had sent him a birthday cake saying, 'Miz Knowles, you wuz the first person to ever make me feel like anybody', illustrates communication and heart-felt language. The Resources that she used in trying to teach Reading must have been Realistic.

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THE PIT AND THE AMBULANCE 16
Diagnosis and Preventative Teaching in Relation to Language Skills

Angela M. Ridsdale

Since "Literacy, a Focus for the Future" is the theme of the first Australian Reading Conference, it will be of some value to us to look at literacy in the context of total language. For that is what the Bullock Report (1975) did. The title of the Report, *A Language for Life* (H.M.S.O. 1975) demonstrates very clearly the Committee's concern for a positive developmental view of reading as an important part, but only a part, of the total language process, and that, to repress a child's talking, listening and writing in favour of its reading is to repress its general language development and, in turn, its reading as well. In fact it goes on to say that reading itself is more than a reconstruction of the author's meaning. It is the perception of those meanings within the relevant experience of the reader. So when James Britton who wrote the chapter on "Language and Learning" chose to head it with this quotation from Georges Gusdorf, 'Man interposes a network of words between the world and himself and thereby becomes the master of the world', it is evident that language is seen as the means by which we structure reality. To quote from that chapter:

> Man's individual, social and cultural achievements can be rightly understood only if we take into account the fact that he is essentially a *symbol-using animal*. By this account what makes us typically human is the fact that we symbolise, or represent to ourselves, the objects, people and events that make up our environment and do so cumulatively, thus creating an inner representation of the world as we have encountered it. (*A Language for Life*, 1975.)

It is not surprising then to find the Committee drawing these inferences from the relationship between language and learning:

1. all genuine learning involves discovery, and it is as ridiculous to suppose that teaching begins and ends with 'instruction' as it is to suppose that 'learning by discovery' means leaving children to their own resources;
2. language has a heuristic function; that is to say a child can learn by talking and writing as certainly as he can by listening and reading;

3. to exploit the process of discovery through language in all its uses is the surest means of enabling a child to master his mother tongue. (*A Language for Life*, 1975.)

Equally obvious too are the reasons that prompted the Committee after making such a claim, to go further and articulate the natural corollary for such a credo for those concerned for its translation into practice:

> We believe it is essential that all teachers in training irrespective of the age group they intend to teach should complete satisfactorily a substantial course in language and in the teaching of reading. (*A Language for Life*, 1975.)

If schools are to achieve their aims of enabling a child to master his mother tongue, then teachers need to be considerably more sophisticated in their attitude towards language in the classroom. It is essential that teachers be equipped to evaluate the language environment of the classroom and to subject language to critical scrutiny. They need to be fully aware of the kinds of demands they can and should make on the child's linguistic and cognitive competence. They need an adequate knowledge of language theory from which to derive some explanations for the language behaviour observed in any instance or group of instances of language deviancy. And they need to be able to plan a programme which is based on the facts of language and language acquisition and a particular child's linguistic capacity and competence. But if the teacher's professional preparation has not included language study approached through a theory of language that provides a principled basis from which the curriculum components are derived, then with the best will in the world his or her teaching may be not only less effective but actually inhibiting to the language development of children and thus to their cognitive growth. Hence, as the Bullock Report noted, there is an urgent need for inservice language education.

But 'any theoretical knowledge offered to teachers must be integrated with the intuitive knowledge on which their teaching is based. Knowledge of linguistic theory alone has little impact on teachers' classroom behaviour'. (*A Language for Life*, 1975.) As Havelock (Havelock, 1971) so rightly argues, to rely exclusively on formal courses is to misjudge the school as a social organism and under-rate the part the teacher himself plays in initiating change. The individual school is a highly important focal point in inservice education and any approach to extension of further education that ignores its potential as a dynamic force is doomed to disappointment. Any language programme for any school must begin in and with that school.

Teachers need to know the answers to the following questions:

Does the development of language stimulate the development of thought?

What strategies are used by children in their acquisition of cognition and language?

What roles do adults play in language development?

Piaget begins his study of *The Language and Thought of the Child* by asking "What are the needs which a child tends to satisfy when he talks?" (Piaget, 1955). To answer this, one needs to understand some basic Piagetian concepts. For Piaget, cognitive development, from the very beginnings of life through to adolescence, is marked by the individual's active and unconscious structuring of the input they receive in the environment. Even before language is aquired children begin to construct their own reality for themselves. In the sensori-motor stage they learn that objects have permanence; at the beginning of the preoperational stage they master use of objects to represent other objects in play and thinking. Finally, by having developed the ability to form real mental images and have labels for these images of objects, they comment on absent objects and past events.

In Piaget's theory, cognitive development determines the course of language growth. The role of the classroom teacher, therefore, is to establish an atmosphere which offers children activities and objects which will stimulate them toward optimum growth. Not only should adults provide objects and produce events designed to promote thinking but they should also use both their own and the children's language to probe and discuss the problems the children encountered in such a way as to provide the children with activities, objects and questions to promote further cognitive growth. Furth (Furth, 1970) provides an excellent framework for study for a school intent on developing a continuous and consistent policy.

In contrast to Piaget, Vygotsky (Vygotsky, 1962) sees the dialogue between adult and child as one of major importance, as a critical factor influencing language development and a stimulus to cognitive growth. Thus children learn names and language structures from their dialogue and while the child takes many years of growth to reach mature conceptual levels, the beginning of language and thought comes from the model provided by adults. Hence in Vygotsky's view the role of adult language is clearly critical for all language and thought development and a classroom for young learners would need to be based on language activities designed to use terms that provide children with cognitive growth.

Bruner (Bruner, 1966) stands somewhere between the two, believing as he does that language plays a stronger role in stimulating

thought than does Piaget, but does not give it as predominant a role as does Vygotsky.

According to Bruner, language becomes a major stimulant to cognition once language acquisition begins, because the quite sophisticated strategies used by children as they acquire language become available for cognitive learning in general and are crucial to cognitive development. In the early stages language stimulates thought by providing children with a complex structure which helps in organization of general cognitive structures. Later, language helps older children attain the achievement of mature thought of individuals who use language to abstract the features of experience and reorganize them into a rational system. So, in answering the questions a school should be asking itself before it develops a language policy, Bruner indicates that language does stimulate cognitive development in many respects. Further, he believes that strategies used in language acquisition serve as stimulants to the development of thought.

Bruner's view of language can provide an acceptable guideline for planning construction for the primary school while findings from Piaget's work and Vygotsky's insights extend Bruner's framework. Children must have active involvement with concrete objects if they are to develop the thinking strategies which will in turn increase language ability. But to follow Piaget's theory alone in developing a school policy might be to ignore the educative role of adult language except as an extending and probing mechanism into children's thinking. We might also underestimate the educative value of children's verbal output except as an indicator of cognitive level as suggested by Furth. On the other hand, if we were to follow Vygotsky exclusively, we would stress adult language.

I am arguing for a school language curriculum that combines elements from all three theoreticians.

A good school programme should provide children with plenty of independent activity, as would a Piaget-based programme, in order to ensure active structuring and involvement in events.

In addition, this programme should include many opportunities for children to hear and interact with adults and each other in dialogue as Vygotsky would recommend. Finally, as Bruner suggests, a programme of merit encourages children to describe their experiences in their own terms and to build on the language forms used.

The school must be clear in its own acceptance of a distinction between two kinds of language. There is the language necessary to the development of the personal self; those imaginative and individually creative aspects of language activity. There is also the language which enables us to make relationships with others; the public and

social aspects of language activity. In addition, the education system demands of children certain language activity that society expects of those who have been or are going through the formal educational system. So a distinction must be drawn. Doughty and Thornton use the terms 'language for learning' and 'language for living' when they say:

> *Language for living* (will) refer to all the ways in which human beings make use of language in the ordinary course of their everyday lives; and *language for learning* will refer to all the ways in which language enters into the process of teaching and learning. A proper understanding of the relationship between *language for living* and *language for learning* is vital to a coherent theory of language study. Unless we see clearly the ways in which language for learning relates to, and derives from language for living, we will never be able to make sense of the language needs of the learners, nor the linguistic problems that face all teachers. (Doughty, Thornton, 1973.)

With such a distinction in mind therefore the school as a whole and then the teachers as individuals need to see that language is for living with and need also to be bold enough to set down some kind of policy, or credo or manifesto to which all teachers can subscribe and by which they will work.

It is worth noting here that while the Bullock Report states plainly that "a child can learn by talking and writing as certainly as he can by listening and reading" nevertheless the Report also notes the developmental nature of language and the undoubted fact that children come to school with considerable individual differences in their performance as users of the language.

It seems of little profit here to become embroiled in the Great Debate sparked off by Bernstein in the late 1950's when he wrote his first article on 'formal' and 'public' language. Too much has been said and written on the so-called restricted and elaborated codes already. Bernstein has become the central figure in the continuing language-deprivation struggle. Much of Bernstein's initial thinking has been reformulated partly because of growth of his own insights and partly because linguists came to the attack armed with powerful linguistic arguments to challenge what was until then considered as a sociological thesis. Educators found that language intervention programmes based on the notion of language deprivation were generally unsuccessful over any length of time. The psycholinguists and sociolinguists began to question seriously the relationships between language utilization (Chomsky's notion of performance) and cognitive or intellectual functioning. The simple equation of school failure with a language deficit simply did not balance out. Other terms enter into calculation — self-esteem, values, language and thinking styles,

motivation, school structures, teacher and parental expectations and the suitability or otherwise of school curricula in terms of catering for cultural and linguistic diversity and pluralism. So the notion of language difference has replaced that of language deficit. No longer is the child perceived as deficient or lacking in language. Rather, the child is seen as having a particular kind of linguistic performance and the teacher's task becomes one of opening up other options rather than topping up deficits. The teacher is to create an environment in which innate linguistic structures can be developed through rich experiential interaction with the environment. Such interaction can only take place when children are confident, both in using their own language and in knowing it is acceptable.

If we accept the fact that a major task of the primary school as presently structured is to develop oracy and translate it into literacy using material written in the standard dialect with all its complexities and subtleties then obviously the child who lacks access to the knowledge, and thus the power, contained in this very large and diverse range of materials, is at a disadvantage however much we may assert the validity and integrity of his/her own dialect. The child must be offered the opportunity and this must necessarily mean being offered the necessary entry language.

If the teacher then is to play such an important role in giving the child access to a range of language uses, how should such situations be structured? There is a good deal of research to indicate that a dyadic interaction between teacher and child, especially when a Taba-like model of questioning is adopted is perhaps the most fruitful and productive approach. Interaction of child and child, small group discussion and story listening and telling, creative drama and imitation all make their significant contribution. Bloom, using data from 22 countries, found uniform indication that the age of 10 years is the cutoff point for verbal development.

> While there is no point in the child's educational development at which it is too late to improve conditions there is considerable evidence that in schools as they are presently organized, the critical point for verbal education is prior to about age 10. (Bloom 1973.)

So the primary school years appear crucial. Are classrooms and curricula, as currently constituted, offering the under-tens sufficient stimulus and opportunity for the verbal interaction vital to this growth? Do they acknowledge the concept of readiness or maturation proposed by Piaget — that children can do only what they are able at any point in time? Do they perceive the teacher's objective as the setting up of an optimum level of disequilibrium so that accommodation and assimiliation in the Piagetian sense will go on and the child

will develop through a continuous process of learner-environment interaction? Most teachers would claim that their classrooms with their frequent discussion-periods do just this. Yet Holt looks with cold realism at the unfortunate reality when he says:

> Most discussions are pretty phony anyway . . . The teacher's questions get more and more pointed until they point straight to the answer. When the teacher finally gets the answer he was after he talks some more to make sure all the students understand it is the "right" answer and why it is . . . Somewhere we got the crazy notion that a class would learn most efficiently if everyone was learning the same thing at the same time as if a class were a factory. (Holt, 1972.)

Where is that imaginative soliciting and clever structuring of the situation that fosters casual, relational and hypothetical thinking in children? Where is that series of teaching strategies that will lift the level of cognitive activity in class? Where is that free and wide-ranging colloquium in which sophisticated language usages can flourish?

If the growing body of research evidence on language facility is correct, then skill in language use and the opportunity to engage in individual verbal interactions go together. Viewed in that light most classrooms must be regarded as highly inadequate settings for learning. If one may argue from Cambourne's naturalistic research, it seems obvious that Australian classrooms are predominantly passive listening environments. He reports that:

> classrooms are extremely non-participant. While in school in one's first year of school it is highly improbable that one will have many opportunities to become actively involved in a dialogue-inducing situation. On the other hand, a massive 82% of one's total talking time is spent in silence, overhearing someone else talk (usually the teacher). (Cambourne, 1974.)

His researches showed that:

> in the classroom nearly 40% of the total number of multiple or group encounters were class-unison responses, e.g. the chanting of combinations or recognizing sight words together, and so on. The other 60% of multiple or group encounters occurring in the classroom were made up of incidents in which a child took up a teacher solicitation to which another child had responded either incorrectly, inadequately or incompletely. (Cambourne, 1974.)

By some ingenious mathematics Cambourne comes up with the horrifying statistic that, subtracting holidays and weekends, a school year averages about 40-42 weeks or approximately 200 days.

> A full session on each of those days lasts about six hours, five of them within the four walls of the classroom. Thus a regular attender might well log up about 1,000 hours inside a classroom setting in which the opportunities for full-blooded dialogue experiences are absolutely minimal. (Cambourne, 1974.)

However all is not gloom on the Australian scene as one after

another the various States move towards radical re-thinking of traditional divisions of the English curriculum in primary schools. Such a movement is the direct outcome of ideas that had their genesis on either side of the Atlantic, in the U.K. and the U.S. The convergence of two separate streams of research — in linguistics and psychology — has thrown fresh light upon our knowledge of the way children learn language and challenged traditional assumptions and methods. The Victorian Education Department's Language Curriculum Statement which was completed in 1974 may be taken as a fair example of the application of such insights to the construction of a language curriculum that attempts to achieve a logical consistence with the structure of language and its developmental course in children as well as with the nature and degree of language deviances which may be encountered. The Introduction states:

> Since 1955, when the last English Course of Study was published, researchers have gathered an increasing body of knowledge about child growth and the part that language plays in the child's overall development.
>
> Since 1968 the Primary Schools English Committee has been compiling new material concerning the language development of children in the primary school.
>
> This material now takes the form of a language curriculum statement, with accompanying guides to amplify particular areas. It does not constitute a 'course of study' in the traditional sense. It has been developed with a view to providing background information for those teachers who have been developing alternative approaches to sections of the 1955 English Course of Study to meet current needs.
>
> With the growth of primary school autonomy the teacher's role has been widened for he now not only has to accept responsibility for course implementation but also for course development.
>
> It was with this policy in mind that the Primary Schools English Committee adopted its present style of presenting material. The statement with its guides is best seen as a source of theory and teaching suggestions from which teachers may plan and devise a language development policy according to their pupils' needs, and then revise it in terms of their own evaluation. (Victorian Education Department, 1976.)

The Language Curriculum Statement

This is a reference statement of the rationale for language teaching in the primary school. There are three parts to it — oracy, literacy and evaluation which are accompanied by very fully outlined resource material for stimulating speaking and writing, for drama and for reading.

The *oracy* section outlines some recent theories of children's development in speaking and listening, and includes examples of activities the teacher may employ to promote this development.

The *literacy* section treats the teaching of reading and writing, as

an integrated process: literacy acquisition. Drawing on psycholinguistic theory the language experience approach to initial literacy acquisition is advocated, with two different styles of approach presented for teachers' consideration. Attention is also given to developing the skills of reading and writing in the upper school. There is an "Ideas for Writing" section which serves to assist teachers to promote children's interest in written expression as a means of clarifying and examining their own experience and communicating it to others.

The *evaluation* section contains guidelines by which teachers are encouraged to develop a course in their own schools bearing in mind the special needs of their children. It also includes a statement on the evaluation of children's progress in language development . . .

> The prevailing thought throughout this Language Curriculum Statement and the Guides is that the development of the child's language is best promoted within contexts that are meaningful to him, and which as far as possible, serve purposes which he sees to be of value to him.
>
> It is the contention of this statement that language skills cannot be developed in isolation for their own sake; moreover, that the child is never let feel that he is learning to read and to write and to re-enact events, and to pursue investigations only because the school and his parents expect it of him. (Victorian Education Department, 1976.)

Victoria is not alone in such an approach to the development of a language curriculum. It is concerned, as are other states, to produce guidelines relevant to the needs of today's children and also to offer pre-service and particularly inservice education to meet the wants of today's teachers. For in an age that may fairly lay claim to be called the post-literate age, traditional assumptions about language learning and their attendant corollaries in language teaching are obviously proving inadequate.

The increasing number of school children who are still functionally illiterate at entry to secondary school gives eloquent testimony to the educator's failure to acknowledge what linguistics, psychology and sociology have to offer to curriculum construction. The need for a fresh approach is self evident and has been ignored for too long. This brings me to the real point of my paper, which is officially titled 'Diagnosis and Preventative Teaching of Language Skills', but as T. S. Eliot said,

> Words strain,
> Crack, and sometimes break under the burden,
> Under the tension, slip, slide, perish
> Decay with imprecision, will not stay in place
> Will not stay still. (Eliot, 1948.)

One of the words that has cracked, slipped and slidden is *diagnosis*. We tend nowadays to confine its use to a clinical context — to sum up the symptoms and make a judgement about a condition.

It actually comes from the Greek — two words — one *dia* meaning through or thorough, the other *gnosis* for knowing or knowledge.

Thorough knowledge of language theory and its application to the classroom is the preliminary and essential beginning of good teaching. And what is good teaching but successful teaching i.e. prevention of failure? Teaching is by definition a transactional affair that involves the teacher and learner in a kind of dialogue. If it is to be teaching at all it must involve learning for it is as ridiculous to say 'I taught him that but he didn't learn it' as it is to claim that 'I sold him something but he didn't buy it'. The teacher who brings to the classroom a theory of development linked both to a theory of knowledge and to a theory of instruction is in a fair way to find the source of success. To a degree, to talk of remedial teaching is to talk of teacher failure.

Hence the alternative title for my paper: 'The Pit and the Ambulance'. It's quite simple really, and I have my grandmother to thank for it. She used to tell the story of the Wise Men of Gotham who were troubled by the existence of a large pit just outside the town into which, in the dark, many worthy citizens were wont to fall, injuring themselves grievously in the process and requiring a number of other worthy citizens to turn out at all hours of the night to haul them up and transport them to a hospital. So the Wise Men put their heads together and decided to station an ambulance permanently near the pit so that it would be always ready for the rescue operation. Until one, who had been silent up till then asked the others, 'Wouldn't it be better to build a fence around the pit so that no one would fall in at all!'

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THE PRE-SERVICE AND INSERVICE READING EDUCATION OF TEACHERS

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David Doake

In one sense this paper should be unnecessary. Coming in the wake of the Bullock Report, *A Language for Life* (1974), Ronald Corder's (1971) massive study *The Information Base for Reading*, Mary Austin's *Professional Training of Reading Personnel* (1968) and the results of her highly significant Harvard-Carnegie Study *The Torch Lighters Tomorrow's Teachers of Reading* (1961), anything that I might write would pale into insignificance. A further damper was put on my enthusiasm towards the end of my preparation for this paper when I read a review of a book of 310 pages published by the International Reading Association in 1974 edited by Sartain & Stanton, entitled *Modular Preparation for Teaching Reading: A Professional Program for Preservice and Continuing Education.* Obviously the writers of this important book had covered the field very comprehensively and anything I might add would be repetitious. But Flight (1974) managed to rekindle my enthusiasm by concluding his review with a call for large numbers of us in schools and universities to rally behind the editors, in their request for the new module which they have formulated to have 'a drastic effect' on teacher education in reading. So in a sense this is a rallying paper to assist in the development and implementation of quality teacher education programmes in reading.

It draws attention to some educationally naive ideas in reading education which seem to be pervasive in their effect on progress being made in the field. It highlights the need for teacher education in reading at all levels, and it outlines some possibilities for programmes.

In endeavouring to answer the question 'Has improvement in reading reached a plateau?' from the standpoint of improvement in teacher education in the United States, Harsh (1971), as a result of an extensive investigation, was forced to reach the lamentable conclusion that 'it is apparent from our survey of the descriptions of courses in reading instruction that there has been little institutional response to the challenges of Austin & Morrison (1961) to improve teacher education'. Apart from the initial improvements implemented as a result of three year teacher education programmes for primary

teachers in New Zealand and some promising recent developments in inservice education, the same conclusion could be reached. It is my belief that this lack of progress is caused primarily by the general acceptance of some irritatingly limited educational ideas which continue to prevail.

Some Harmful Beliefs

You can train reading teachers

The first of these is a belief than you can *train* potential teachers through pre-service courses of a few semester hours to 'teach reading'. But you cannot do that. You can *train* almost any parent or a ten year old child to take a class for 'reading' using an SRA Laboratory, or to listen to a group reading orally using barber shop (Next please!) techniques. But this is *not* teaching reading. Both of these activities are test situations where the reader may well be practising more bad reading habits than good ones. You give teachers recipes when you train them and teacher trainers have been doing this for years in pre-service and in inservice courses for reasons which will become apparent later in this paper.

Education on the other hand implies an understanding of what one does based on carefully thought out principles and reasons. If you were 'educated in reading', you would never use oral circle reading methods for any purpose and you would certainly think twice about using SRA Reading Laboratories because of their heavy test emphasis. Becoming educated in reading and reading teaching is a life-long process and it cannot be achieved in relatively short pre-service courses. Continuing education must be provided in this field for all teachers. Anything that I write in this paper applies equally to pre-service and inservice reading education.

Primary teachers only are responsible for reading teaching

For too long it has been believed that primary teachers only, and more especially those primary teachers who are concerned with the very young, have the sole responsibility for teaching the students who are moving through our educational institutions how to read. The beginning and the end of the process of learning to read effectively have been left almost entirely in the hands of the primary teacher. Lip service has been given to the truism that the development of the individual's ability to read is a continuous process. Teachers at all levels of education have a direct responsibility to contribute to the development of this process.

You can read — you can teach others to read!

Not only has the teaching of reading been left in the hands of our primary teachers, but it has been left in the hands of teachers, who,

until recently in New Zealand at least, have experienced only minimal courses in reading education as part of their pre-service education. Too many of our primary teachers still enter classrooms with limited knowledge and skill in the teaching of reading. Their courses in this vital area of the curriculum may have been of brief duration, limited in scope and perhaps of marginal quality. They may not have even been required to take a course in reading. Even more importantly they may have gained very little from the course they took because of a variety of factors: their relative immaturity and not knowing what they 'needed to know'; the difficulty the pre-service course teacher faces in countering the effects on students of approximately 10,000 hours they have already spent in classrooms; the effects of seeing reading badly taught during school practice but not being aware of this; they may not have been able to study effectively because of their own low level of ability in reading.

But the principle seems to be that if you can read as demonstrated by your ability to satisfy course requirements and exams, you can teach others to read, whether you have displayed your knowledge and ability to do so or not.

Qualifications in reading not necessary for teaching the teachers

The first Harvard-Carnegie study conducted by Austin & Morrison (1961), found a preponderant emphasis on elementary and general education in the backgrounds of teachers holding positions in reading education. Austin (1968) summed this up by stating that 'It appears, then, that undergraduate courses in reading instruction were being taught by those whose own preparation had been in education generally rather than reading specifically'. This observation is strikingly similar to the New Zealand scene and apparently to the Australian one as well. We have only one teacher in New Zealand who has majored at both the master's and doctoral degree levels in reading. Although this person is at a teachers college he has only a minor responsibility in reading!

But this lack of qualifications in reading can hardly be laid at the door of those holding positions in reading education since courses of study beyond a basic methods level are not available in the country. Again, to the best of my knowledge a similar situation exists in Australia. Those who at present hold positions of this kind have demonstrated a marked ability to "learn on the job", but I wonder if we would accept that our surgeon, our lawyer or our engineer be allowed to practise with only a general study for preparation?

Equally alarming of course is the problem of the school principal or the senior assistants in our schools. Many of these teachers would

not have experienced any pre-service reading education courses and may have attended a brief inservice course in this field during their careers as teachers. They have been teachers when oral circle reading was king, where 'grunt and groans' phonics predominated, where reading was seen as one of the performing arts. And now they are in positions of leadership in our schools. Unless they have made a personal study of the field of reading it would seem to be unlikely that they could evaluate the effectiveness of the reading programmes in their schools or offer much in the way of guidance to their teachers with any degree of confidence or competence.

The Need for Teacher Education in the Field of Reading

The good news

Despite the cries of alarm concerning the lowering standards of literacy which appear in our news media from time to time, and despite reports such as that of the National Foundation for Educational Research (Start & Wells, 1972) which appeared to demonstrate that there had been a downward trend in reading standards in the United Kingdom during the late 1960's, the available evidence indicates that the students in schools, colleges, and universities in the United States at least are reading slightly better than ever before, Gates (1961a), Schrader (1968). The rate of improvement does not appear to have been very great and the measuring instruments are frequently blunt and suspect, but it does seem that we are not reading less or any worse than we were a couple of decades ago.

Again on the credit side in reading, the books that we use for instructional purposes are vastly improved and the 'Come Janet, Come John. Look, look' kind of material is no longer acceptable to the majority of our teachers. Finally, over the past decade in New Zealand at least, basic reading methods courses have become compulsory for all potential primary teachers at least and hopefully these may have had some effect on the quality of reading teaching.

The bad news

Although standards of reading achievement are not falling, our schools, colleges and universities are still littered with students who are reading well below their potential, students who are in fact seriously retarded in reading. In our primary and secondary schools at least these students have their failure exposed almost every day. Through this exposure in front of their peer group and their increasing awareness of their difficulty their self concept receives a regular and deliberate battering like a stock car on a Saturday night. I have conducted numerous diagnostic reading interviews with students from six years of age to adult level who are all too frequently literally cowered

by failure in reading, whose confidence has been sapped by years of exposed failure, who see books as something to be feared.

About twenty years ago I was teaching in a 'special class' for backward children and a new twelve-year-old boy arrived in the class from a country school. I decided to conduct an informal reading inventory and gave him a book at a six-year-old reading level. He immediately burst into tears. I discovered that Tim had had that book every day of his school life for reading. He had not been allowed to move on to the next book until he had read that one perfectly! After three months on language experience stories based on farm life Tim had developed a reading vocabulary of 140 words. I have never forgotten that experience.

Teachers have got to stand up and be counted when adult illiterates are found in our communities. An examination of the case histories of these people all too frequently demonstrates that their failure can be laid at the door of clumsy teaching. All too frequently these illiterates have been made that way by the kind of practices they have endured during all their school days. They have been categorized as failures very early in their school careers, often branded with that useless and appallingly harmful teacher-and-parent-escape-label 'dyslexia'. They have been put in the 'bottom group' year after year, their difficulties never adequately diagnosed, let alone treated. Sometimes they are subjected to a battery of tests by a school psychologist and the report of their failings sent back to the school. Seldom however does the psychologist report anything positive concerning what the child can do with language. Even more rarely does this report contain much in the way of positive and constructive suggestions as to how this child may be helped. The report is filed and forgotten. The reading failure remains a reading failure. Apathy and withdrawal become the escape routes until something drives them to seek help outside the school system.

Significantly, investigations conducted by Austin and Morrison (1961), Adams (1964), Komarek (1962), Farr (1968) and McGuire (1969) and others reveal that teachers feel inadequately equipped to deal with diagnosis and treatment of reading problems and ways of meeting individual differences.

If for no other reason than to reduce and eventually eliminate reading failure in our schools, colleges and universities, potential and practising teachers must demonstrate their ability to identify those students experiencing difficulty and take the appropriate steps to alleviate their difficulties. To expect teachers to become skilful in this complex task on the basis of intuition may well be expecting the impossible.

Product vs process

The recent Report of the Curriculum Review Group of the New Zealand Post Primary Teachers Association 'Education in Change' gives another compelling reason for providing teachers with adequate courses in the study of reading. In the section of the report dealing with 'Learning and Enquiry' the committee records that: 'The thesis of this section is the development in young people of the urge to enquire. The following statement summarizes this thesis simply: that enquiry promotes the ability to learn how to learn. This ability subsumes all other competencies discussed in this report'. (1969, p. 39.)

That such a statement could emanate from a group of teachers most of whom have for years been responsible for presenting a curriculum aimed at having students absorb tremendous amounts of relatively useless factual information for the major purpose of retrieving it at examination time, dramatically demonstrates the direction of a highly significant and much needed change in secondary education at least. The emphasis in education is shifting from product to process, from having pupils memorize large amounts of inert information, to the processes involved in learning and enquiry; from pupils being constantly taught what to learn to pupils being stimulated, encouraged and taught how to learn.

As this happens the emphasis will shift from teachers being, as Anderson (1968, p. 10) suggests, 'primary sources of information' to books being one of the major resources used by pupils. If our secondary teachers are not trained in the use of soundly based methods of guiding and teaching their students how to read these books, 'the learning how to learn' philosophy will stagger along like an engine starving for the want of fuel.

The need for thoughtful, critical, constructive and independent learners is far greater today than ever before — and this need will go on growing. The calamities of population, poverty, power (human and nuclear) and pollution are demanding rational and universal action. The need is urgent for readers who can gather information rapidly, evaluate critically and make rapid and right decisions as a result of these processes. The need is urgent for more and more people to read reflectively and arrive at decisions independently which will assist in diverting their nations from their courses of virtual self destruction.

I make no apology for using Don Fabun's (1967 story of the Shafter cow as H. Alan Robinson (1969) did to highlight this urgent need to develop learners and leaders who are potent, critical, interactive readers.

> 'At exactly 5.13 a.m. the 18th of April, 1906, a cow was standing somewhere between the main barn and the milking shed on the old

Shafter Ranch in California, minding her own business. Suddenly, the earth shook, the skies trembled, and when it was all over, there was nothing showing of the cow above ground but a bit of her tail sticking up. For the student of change, the Shafter cow is a sort of symbol of our times. She stood quietly enough, thinking such gentle thoughts as cows are likely to have, while huge forces outside her ken built up all around her and — within a minute — discharged it all at once in a great movement that changed the configuration of the earth, destroyed a city, and swallowed her up. And that's what we are going to talk about now; how, if we do not learn to understand and guide the great forces of change at work on our world today, we may find ourselves like the Shafter cow, swallowed up by vast upheavals in our way of life — quite early some morning'.

Quality reading teaching in our educational institutions will not be the only factor in steering our nations towards paths of survival, but they are certainly one of the essential prerequisites.

Reading Education for Whom?

Any teacher who uses books as aids to learning needs to be educated in the ways of making best use of these extensive and usually reliable resource materials. Teachers at the pre-school, primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education all use books. Teachers at all levels of education therefore should be taught how to make best use of them, as sources of information and even more importantly, as vehicles for developing thinking and feeling.

Too often in presenting proposals for improving reading teaching and learning, educators ignore one of the most important mediums of instruction. It is becoming increasingly obvious that parents play a highly significant role in the rate of progress their children make in learning to read. We must stop thinking of parents as builders of bonny babies and begin to think of them more importantly as builders of bonny brains. Teachers must assume far greater responsibility in educating parents in ways of developing the use of books and language for this purpose.

Comprehensive public, pre-service and inservice reading education which ultimately lead to the more effective use being made of books as means of learning and leisure, may not provide all the solutions for the improvement of our educational practices but they would make a highly significant contribution.

The Pre-School Teacher

The experienced teacher of beginning readers knows that some children come to school, fully developed in a readiness for reading sense. These children seem to find the task of learning to read easy and they soon become high progress readers, without a great deal of effort on the part of the teacher.

But the experienced teacher knows equally well that some children come to school quite unprepared for learning to read and find the task inordinately difficult and frustrating. Despite receiving a great deal of attention from the teacher these children take halting steps in learning to read and soon become classified as low progress readers, a label from which they seldom seem to escape. Except at the extremes, intelligence does not seem to be an important factor. What causes these differences? Why is it that one child can come to school and begin to function immediately and automatically in appropriate ways whenever he is placed with books, while another child begins by displaying uncertainty and bewilderment when placed in the same situation?

Building on the work done by Munroe (1969), Clay (1970, 1972) and Goodman (1970, 1972), Holdaway (1974) has been able to identify the characteristics of these potentially high progress readers, through the careful observation of their reading and language behaviours as pre-school children. Right from the time the child begins to learn his language the seed of a 'set towards literacy' is established. Holdaway was able to observe reading-like behaviours appearing as early as two years of age.

Through continued observation he has been able to outline for us the important pre-school learnings about reading which appear to make learning to read a highly successful and rewarding task right from the beginning. According to Holdaway,

> The child from a book-oriented home has normally developed high expectations of print, knowing that books bring him a special range of pleasures which he can obtain in no other way. He has built a set of language models for the written dialect and practised these models across his own tongue to the point where they have become part of his native language. He is familiar with written symbols as something quite different from normal visual experience, and he has become fascinated by them to the point where he has tried to produce them himself in print-like scribble. He has begun to understand the complex conventions of directionality in print knowing, for instance, that the story unfolds from the print itself moving top to bottom, left to right.
>
> He has learned to listen for increasing periods of time to continuous language which is interrelated in terms of plot, sequence, or central ideas. He is able to attend to language without reference to the sensory world around him at the moment and respond to the language in complex ways by creating sensory or emotional images from his past experience. This has opened a new dimension of fantasy and imagination to his experience allowing him to create images which appear nowhere in the sensory world — angels, giants and gentlemen. He is able to escape from the confines of here and now into the past and the future.
>
> Such a child is all set up for reading — he is ready to go. (Holdaway, 1974).

The role of the parent and pre-school teacher then is clear. Not only do they have to become even more aware of the critically important role they have to play in developing each child's 'set towards literacy', but they have to be trained to identify deficiencies in the development. The diagnosing of the child's literacy needs must become as important as being alert to his physical needs. Although I would not advocate a prescription-and-pill-type approach to plugging the gaps, parents and other pre-school teachers have to make conscious and constructive efforts to ensure that the five and six year old child's 'reading behaviour system is finely tuned', that he has developed the necessary range of book and language concepts, attitudes and skills. Where gaps have appeared these have been closed by specific experiences. Through constant and varied interaction with books and language at home, at the play centre, and in the kindergarten, the child enters the learning to read situation at school ready and able to go.

Primary Teachers

It is now accepted in our primary colleges at least that specific courses in reading education should be provided for all students. These courses range in lecture contact hours from thirty to approximately seventy clock hours, with some colleges providing additional courses for some students. It must be pointed out however that courses of any substance in reading at our primary teachers colleges are only a recent innovation. Until the introduction of the three year pre-service teacher education course in the mid 1960's, almost all primary teachers attending New Zealand teachers colleges would have undertaken courses in reading of no more than eight to ten clock hours. Many of those courses were directed at the teaching of reading at the infant (5 and 6 year old) stage.

Many teachers, who attended our colleges before the course of study was extended to three years cannot remember studying the teaching of reading while at teachers college. Many of these teachers have never attended an inservice or refresher course in the teaching of reading. Some have studied at what I call 'public relations' inservice courses. All too frequently however these courses have an adverse rather than a beneficial effect on the reading teaching practices of those who attend. They leave the course inspired to change their methods of teaching, to try out new ideas, but because of the brevity of the course and their lack of in-depth understanding of the field, their innovations fail; sometimes this failure results in disillusionment and a resolve to avoid trying anything new again.

It would be interesting also to discover how many primary teachers

have actually studied an authoritative textbook on reading. How many primary teachers could actually describe the reading process with a definition that goes beyond simple word perception and comprehension?

In 1972, the New Zeland Department of Education published and issued to every classroom in the country a 248 page book entitled 'Reading: Suggestions for Teaching Reading in Primary and Secondary'. Despite the fact that it took approximately ten years to finish, the book is a useful, recipe-type, readable text written at about a 14 year old readability level. Apart from another handbook of suggestions for teaching reading in the junior school, the 1972 book is the only one on reading available universally in our schools. But what are the Departmental officers finding? That teachers are not reading it. The Department has held an inservice course recently for reading advisers for them to devise ways of having the teachers open their book and begin to read. What is the effect on reading teaching in our schools when we have teachers who have never studied reading, who are working too often from a basis of intuition, on incidental learning and on how they think they were "taught" to read? The outcomes of these important questions require objective answers. I cannot provide these but I can make brief comment based on my teaching experience in the field of reading.

Over the past decade I have examined in excess of three thousand reports from student teachers of diagnostic reading conferences they have conducted with individual children at various levels of our primary schools. The result of a careful examination of these reports is the realisation that far too many of these children could be classified as retarded or seriously retarded in reading. They are usually hesitant, fumbling, word-by-word readers, who are heavily dependent on a few confusing phonic skills to unlock unknown words. If the beginning sound and 'a guess at the rest' does not give it to them, then they take their attempt no further. Perhaps even more importantly they do not seem to want to. The ability to demand and obtain meaning from the printed page at anything above a superficial, literal level, appears too often to be seriously lacking, and they do not engage in self-monitoring processes. Again they appear neither to see the need to interact with the author's ideas, nor to have the desire to do so. They are unable to use their knowledge of language from the syntactical and semantic point of view, to process the print before their eyes.

Even more seriously, when reports are examined of ten, eleven and twelve year old children who are failing in reading, a number of things become apparent. Many of these children are all too frequently disabled readers from what appears to be the same casual factors that

in all probability started them on the road to reading failure when they were five, six and seven year olds. Their basic sight vocabularies have remained undeveloped, their word recognition skills are minimal, their ability to obtain and demand meaning from reading severely restricted. Reading has often been seen by these pupils as something difficult, something that they can only fail in, something that is not for them. They have by this stage become educational cripples whose main goal usually is to escape as soon as possible from the verbally loaded environment of the school.

We appear to have reached the ludicrous stage where we accept retardation in reading as a normal condition for a number of children. The stage appears to have been reached where teachers expect to have disabled readers present in their classrooms and where they expect to have children fail in reading. The so called "remedial reading teacher" is now an expected part of the school staffing schedule. The self-fulfilling prophecy has entered the field of reading.

I would surmise that the majority of our primary school teachers could easily point out to us their retarded readers who were achieving below their expectation level and below their chronological age. However, they would seldom identify the child who was reading above his chronological age level but several years below his expectancy level, the child of above average ability who is not reaching his potential, who is all too often supposed to be able to develop competence to an advanced level in reading without the teacher's guidance. These pupils are our really serious reading failures.

The picture I have painted then is a black one. It is meant to be. Too many of the causal factors in reading disability have an instructional base which is frequently the outcome of inadequate teacher education in the field of reading. Many of our teachers do a wonderful job of teaching and stimulating our children to read, but too many of them actually promote failure rather than prevent it by some of their classroom practices involving reading. 'At the base of every failure there is the contributing factor of the teacher's inability to recognise the pupils peculiar needs and handicaps, to adapt procedures accordingly'. (Spache, 1969, p. vi.)

Inservice and refresher courses, reading advisors and diploma in teaching courses, handbooks of suggestions and comprehensive syllabuses of instruction, can help to overcome in part this serious gap in the background of too many of our teachers, but unfortunately the mesh of the net is far too large and the net itself not sufficiently wide. There are still too many of our teachers who have only a superficial base from which to begin to teach their pupils to read.

Even with the development of the three year courses in our

teachers colleges, too frequently reading is seen as a relatively minor course, when compared with other subject areas. The study of reading, despite its extensive scope, is still not recognized as a subject discipline in its own right. The colleges are required to provide courses in the eight traditional subject fields, so that a percentage of their students each year hopefully can go out into schools with an "in-depth" knowledge in at least one of these fields as a result of three years of study in their "selected" subject. But not so in reading. Substantial courses for the pre-service training for even a percentage of our teachers in one of the most important facilitating skill and process areas of the curriculum are still not a reality in our teachers colleges. Reading is probably the only subject taken at our teachers colleges where it is not considered essential for the teaching staff to have any particular qualifications or expertise in their subject field. As long as you are a reasonably successful primary teacher, you can not only teach others to read but you can teach teachers how to teach reading. The idea that "if you can read you can teach others to read" takes on this even more alarming dimension!

Against this background of reading still not being recognized as a subject discipline in our teachers colleges, against the background of past two-year teacher education programmes in reading being only minimal in time allocation, what should be the content of pre-service programmes in reading for potential primary teachers?

It is not difficult to find agreement among authorities as to what the scope of these programmes should be. Such essential topics as the following are almost invariably included in any recommended prescription: the nature of the reading process, readiness in reading (the assessment and promotion aspects at all levels), the skills of reading vocabulary, word recognition, comprehension, content reading skills, oral reading), measurement, evaluation and diagnosis, the causes of reading failure, organizing and teaching reading at the different levels of the school, instructional reading materials, the broad field of children's literature, using the media for reading teaching, and parents and learning to read. All these topics need to be studied in depth.

It is also now generally accepted that student teachers should have extensive, concurrent, supervised practice in diagnostic testing and teaching procedures. Initially, this should be with individuals, then moved through to small and then large groups of children. Some of this teaching should be of the micro-teaching kind. It is also usually recommended that part of this controlled teaching experience should be with children at both ends of the reading achievement continuum, as well as those who are making normal progress.

How much time then would be needed for a programme of this nature to be implemented? My experience based on ten years of taking courses involving this kind of content and methodology for sixty lecture contact hours (approximately five semester hours) is, that this period of time is the absolute minimum in which to provide student teachers with merely a basis from which to begin to learn the complex task of teaching children to read effectively.

It is of particular interest to note that the Bullock Report recommends a basic course of 150 hours in reading and language for primary teachers. Flight (1974), in a recent review of Sartain and Stanton's (1974) book *Modular Preparation for Teaching Reading: a Professional Program for Pre-service and Continuing Education*, is of the opinion 'that to do any kind of justice to the model programme (recommended), an undergraduate elementary major should devote the equivalent of some ten semester hours or so to knowledge and skill acquisition in reading areas'.

Secondary Teachers

If the following questions were asked of subject teachers in our secondary schools, each question would almost certainly be answered in the affirmative: is learning to read a continuous process? For students to study effectively in your area it is necessary for them to be able to read? Are there specific reading/study skills applicable to your particular subject area? Do you have a wide range of reading ability present in your classes? No matter what the ability level of your students, do you think that they may meet with some difficulty in doing their required reading? Do you know of many students whose education progress is being hindered by their inability to read effectively?

If these subject teachers were then asked what action they were taking to teach their students to read more effectively in their subject areas, they would almost certainly answer in plaintive voice that they do not have time to 'teach everything' and that it is not their job to teach their students to read. In all probability, they would be unaware that a dichotomy should exist between content and process. They would be unaware of the principle that the teaching of a particular subject involves the teaching of the study of that subject. Regardless of what level of education we look at, the teacher is the person responsible for guiding his students' development in the full range of reading skills relevant to the kinds of reading tasks they have to carry out.

Although the climate for accepting this important responsibility is changing in our secondary schools, lip service is unfortunately still

being given to reading instruction, in a developmental sense, in these institutions. All too frequently students are asked to read uninteresting and difficult material in an "obediently purposeless" manner. The lack of assistance given and the difficulties encountered have the unfortunate effect of reinforcing further negative attitudes in students who are too often, already sadly disillusioned by problems of learning through reading.

In 1948, the Committee on Reading for the National Society for the Study of Education stated, with reference to the reading required of secondary school and college students, that 'The need is urgent on the part of many students for guidance which will aid them in acquiring greater competence in reading, in adjusting to the varied reading demands made upon them, and in securing certain types of understanding and interpretation' (1958, p. 2). This kind of statement has been made consistently since that time. Research has been conducted which demonstrates the values of guiding the reading development of students. Books have been published to give secondary teachers the necessary theoretical background and practical example from which to teach reading in their subject areas and from a developmental base. Yet a survey of high school English teachers conducted by McGuire (1969) in the United States showed that when the number of years of teaching experience was cross-tabulated with preparation for teaching, no improvement had taken place in the preparation of newer English teachers for reading instruction over the past decade. The only reason I can determine for this amazing state of non-development must lie in the obsession secondary teachers have with a subject centred, teacher controlled, examination dominated curriculum coupled with a fervent hope and sometimes surreptitious encouragement, that their reading failures will leave school as soon as possible. If one of the aims of secondary school education is to develop students as independent learners, then teachers have an inescapable responsibility to guide and develop the reading abilities of their students continuously and in all subject areas.

It would appear logical to assume that the time to start teaching students how to read effectively in the subject fields, is when they begin to study in these areas. It is not enough to be efficient in literary reading and general reading skills common to all reading activities. Even if the situation was perfect in our primary schools, and pupils progressed through to the secondary schools without suffering from any disability in the field of reading, the need for secondary teachers to guide the further development of their student's skills must always be present. Unfortunately, however, 'too often teachers assume that students already possess what they have come to receive: skills and

ideas related to a given body of knowledge. One must not assume students' competence; one must assure it. And the assurance comes when students are guided by teachers' (Herber, 1965, p. 9).

If there is an urgent need then still further to upgrade the courses in the study of reading at our primary teachers colleges, there is an even more urgent need to develop and implement courses in this field for all potential secondary school teachers.

That we have reached the year 1975 without basic courses in the study of reading being an essential part of a secondary teacher's education is a further indication that despite the impetus provided for change by the publication of books such as 'Education in Change', the emphasis in too many of secondary schools continues to be placed on the product of education rather than the process. And as Anderson suggests, all too frequently the teacher has been the producer of the information and the information processor rather than the student. The student's task has been that of listening to the teacher and copying his summaries, and one of the unfortunate outcomes of this kind of 'teaching' is that if '. . . a pupil is taught rather than encouraged to learn, then the reading skills he requires are minimal and not much beyond word recognition' (Anderson, 1970, p. 10).

If a basic course in reading were studied by our prospective teachers for our secondary schools, what might be some of the possible effects of the knowledge and understanding that should develop from this study? How for example would the full understanding and acceptance of the concepts of readability and independent and instructional levels in reading alter the use made and the selection of the text-books for study in the secondary school? What is the ultimate effect of having pupils constantly read at their frustration level?

If our secondary teachers learned and applied the principles of the directed silent reading type lesson to any reading they required their students to do, how would this affect current classroom practice? If, for example, they developed their students' readiness for their required reading, by ensuring that they each possessed an adequate background of knowledge and experience to deal with any new concepts met during their reading; that their interest in the subject matter to be read had been stimulated to such a stage that they actually wanted to read the material; that relevant and realistic purposes had been established so that each student understood clearly why he was reading the material and what he was expected to find out from his reading and retain. How would the application of these simple but basic principles of directing reading change current practice as to

the use made of books in our secondary schools? Perhaps an important outcome from these practices would be an increasing awareness on the part of the teachers of how difficult, uninteresting and badly written some of their textbooks are and they would begin to select them more carefully.

The need is urgent then for secondary teachers to know and apply the basic principles of reading teaching during their day to day teaching and assignment setting with students who are not experiencing any serious difficulties with reading. The need is probably even more urgent for teachers to learn ways of assisting those people who cannot read the usual material for study purposes. Although the figures vary from school to school it would appear that at least twenty per cent of students in secondary schools suffer from reading problems considered to be sufficiently serious as to warrant special attention. In this review of the surveys conducted recently in the United States, Corder (1970) reports that between fifty and sixty per cent of these students were not receiving this necessary attention. These surveys also reported that teachers felt inadequately equipped to deal with reading difficulties.

Although there are no reports of surveys of this type conducted in New Zealand schools, on the basis of my experience I would estimate that similar figures would be obtained if they were.

Despite the fact that the continued development of reading as a tool for academic success is crucial to secondary school students, despite the fact that reading at each class level may range from eight to at least thirteen years, and despite the serious incidence of pupils with reading difficulties in these schools, pre-service and inservice reading education courses for New Zealand secondary teachers are virtually non-existent. Whether reading is taught as a subject or as an integral part of the subject areas of the curriculum, substantial pre-service and inservice reading education courses should be taken by all potential and practising secondary school teachers. The duration of these courses would be similar to that already outlined for the primary teacher. The content would need to include however, a greater emphasis on general and specific reading-study skills, the principles involved in the preparation of study guides, the examination and application of book selection criteria, and methods of assisting those readers who are experiencing specific difficulty. That the development of such courses and the taking of the few that are available is left almost entirely to chance is an indictment of those responsible for planning secondary teacher education provisions at the pre-and in-service levels.

Tertiary Level

All tertiary teachers

There are two major problems related to reading education at the tertiary level. Both continue to remain virtually unacknowledged in New Zealand. Both are serious and pervasive in their effect. The first of these lies with the task of having all who teach at this level accept their responsibility to act as teachers in the true sense of the word, and take specific steps not only to provide their students with readable textbooks, but to know how to assist them in various ways to read these books. The second aspect of concern of course is the almost complete absence of teachers who have made reading their major field of academic study, who are available to take up the reading education positions in our universities, teachers colleges and technical institutes. Both of these problems are commented on.

Teachers in our tertiary institutions frequently operate on a number of false assumptions concerning their own teaching responsibilities and their students' academic and skill achievements. Two of the most important relevant to reading are the assumption that the students taking their courses can read their required textbooks effectively and the assumption that they have little or no responsibility to assist these students in reading these required texts. This is Herber's 'assumptive teaching' (1970, p. 29) at its worst as the available evidence will show.

It is not difficult to find studies which have been conducted in the United States which demonstrate that a high correlation exists between reading ability and scholastic success at the tertiary level. One of the few reported studies in New Zealand in this area, however, was made by Small at the University of Canterbury. He was able to report 'It can be clearly seen that, in respect of the reading skill measured in this test, the completely successful students were as a group, markedly superior to failing students . . . The disparity in reading ability between the successful and unsuccessful students is quite apparent' (Small, 1966, pp. 16-18). In a more recent study designed to examine the predictive quality of the Florida Twelfth Grade (Reading) Test in college achievement, Wilson & Einbecker (1974) were able to report a positive and significant correlation between reading ability and academic performance of junior college freshmen. Witty, in summing up the results of research into the importance of reading as an aid to learning in secondary schools and colleges was able to draw the conclusion that 'Scholastic progress is influenced definitely by the extent and nature of the reading competence of students' (Witty, 1948, p. 11). Reading skill is an important

component of most students' successes at the tertiary level of education.

What then are some of the findings of research directed at determining the quality of these students' reading abilities?

Unfortunately, despite the obvious importance of reading at the tertiary level, an examination of the literature reporting studies in reading conducted in New Zealand and Australia at this level of education reveals a paucity of relevant investigations. It is therefore necessary to refer almost exclusively to the overseas literature and research findings in this particular field. Frequent discussions with students concerning their reading abilities, individual remedial work with students and from the results of reading achievement testing conducted over a period of eleven years involving the processing of approximately 4,000 protocols, have led me to the conclusion that if similar studies were conducted in New Zealand the results obtained could well be comparable to those reported here.

There is no shortage of studies which show the seriousness of the extent of college students' reading and study deficiencies. Halfter & Douglass (1958), after a careful eight year study concluded that two thirds of their entering freshmen lacked reading skills required for academic success. Hadley (1957), in a similar, extensive study estimated that 95 per cent of college entrants lack adequate skills and a relatively small percentage have reading speeds and comprehension skills necessary for the preparation of their college assignments.

More recently Gibson (1971) reported that the Nelson Denny Reading Test Scores of a sample of 200 California community college students indicated that 65 per cent had poor reading ability, 24 per cent average, and 11 per cent superior. Informal reading inventory test results indicated that over half of these students were reading at their frustration level. McClellen (1971) compared the reading achievements levels of junior college students in four social science area classes and one English class with readability levels of twenty selected texts. She found that fewer than 30 per cent of students enrolled in the college would be able to read their texts. Of eight texts found to have a readability level of 16+, three were selected for use with students in remedial-type courses!

In a paper presented at the 1968 conference of the Australia and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science, Anderson reported from his experience with university and adult reading improvement courses that most university students and adults exhibited a number of unsatisfactory reading characteristics. He found, for example, that they were word-by-word readers who

regarded all words as essential to comprehension. He found little evidence of their setting useful purposes before their reading and as a result of this their reading was characterized by a lack of flexibility. 'The pattern used was the of a slow, intensive reading, with an effort, usually unsuccessful, to read for long term recall of all information, irrespective of its possible usefulness . . . (and that) . . . in the main, readers were unaware of their inefficiency' (Anderson, 1968, p. 12).

It is not difficult then to discover studies which report the presence of widespread and serious reading and study disability at the tertiary level of education. But, as it was with the transition from primary to secondary education, so it is with the transition from secondary to tertiary level education. Even if the students come through a relatively perfect 'system', it is obvious that the tertiary level teacher would still have reading and study teaching responsibilities. In the Sixtieth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Shaw asserts that '. . . the proper teachers to train college (university) students to develop their reading ability are instructors of lower Freshmen' (Shaw, 1961, p. 344).

Most of us have attended a tertiary educational institution at some time where we would have been required to read textbooks or parts of textbooks. How many of us can remember being given guidance for doing our assigned reading? How was our reading usually assigned? By page numbers of chapters? Did our 'teachers' ever give us specific purposes for our reading? Did we know what they wanted us to find out in terms of information and understandings? What kinds if ideas did they want us to develop? What were we expected to retain from our reading? Were we expected to read the whole book and remember everything in it? Some of the effects of the lack of guidance and purpose given to students for their required reading should be noted.

Over two decades ago Burton was strongly critical of the prevailing practices in secondary schools in the United States with regard to the manner in which students were directed to their required reading. His rather pungent remarks could well be directed at many of our tertiary level institutions today. He observed:

> The meager, vague, unanalysed, wholly inadequate type of assignment predominates in the secondary school practically to the exclusion of all other forms . . . Despite fifty years of attack by competent critics armed with unlimited valid evidence there persists the wholly unexplained assignment aimed at "covering the text" . . . It would be difficult to devise an educational practice so grossly ineffective, so certainly calculated to interfere with learning, as a page assignment to a single text followed by a formal verbal quiz. Yet this is the practice

used by the great majority of secondary school teachers. (Burton, 1950, p. 277)

Over forty years ago Washburne (1929) established that question guided reading was superior to a generalized page assignment. The results of the majority of the recent studies concerned with the characteristics of questions that influence learning from textural materials have been summarized in reviews published by Pyper (1968), Weintraub (1969), Frase (1968a, 1970), and Rothkopf (1970). The results of my own unpublished research and the conclusions reached by other researchers in this area support Washburne's general finding as to the superiority of question guided reading in facilitating learning and retention from textural materials. In my study, students who were asked to read an extensive Chapter (7,700 words) of a college textbook and use interspersed, reasoning-type ('why') questions in pre-reading positions achieved significantly (.01) better scores than the 'read carefully' group on an unwarned essay-type test held a week after the reading and on a 26-item, objective-type test, conducted ten weeks later. If questions are going to be given to such factors as question type, placement, frequency, and the contiguity of the questions and the related content. These factors must be considered in the preparation of any reading guides involving the use of questions or directions for required reading.

If our tertiary level teachers are to continue in their vitally important role of educating our future teachers, they have an inescapable responsibility to provide sound models of excellent teaching practices themselves. It is my belief that too many teachers at this level fail in this important responsibility. And the most visible area of their failure is in the field of reading teaching. Herber forcibly reminds us of our responsibilities here when he points out that

> If we accept the thesis that the essence of good teaching is showing students how to do what they are required to do then . . . students must be guided as they read . . . The crucial factor is how one guides his students in the use of materials required in the course. (Herber, 1970, pp. 24-5)

Tertiary reading teachers

As with most urgently required, important and radical changes in any field the major problem of instituting a change in teacher education in reading lies in the first instance with the number of people available with sufficient expertise to institute the desired and required change.

Although the provisions for the study of reading and for the pre-service education of teachers in New Zealand are still looked upon by some, as being catered for adequately by the existing situation, the fact is that there is no way in this country of anyone advancing his

knowledge, understanding and expertise in reading beyond the introductory level, other than by pursuing a course of independent study, research and practice. Austin lists in the book *The Torch Lighters* the views of college instructors as to the barriers which they believed were blocking the accomplishments of their course objectives. These are: the lack of time, the burying of the reading course in a language arts and other subject matter areas, inadequate observational facilities, the placement of the reading methods course too early in the preservice training period, and a total educational environment in some associate schools which was not conducive to effective teacher preparation. Significantly Austin observes '. . . that not one faculty member admitted deficiencies in his own professional competence . . .' (Austin, 1968, p. 384). Comment has already been made on Austin's finding that the qualifications of those responsible for reading education courses for teachers were in education generally and not in reading. Maybe not knowing what you do not know is a self protection measure?

Not only then, do we have a major problem in the lack of qualified and experienced personnel with the knowledge to institute the needed change, but we are probably faced with the even greater problem of convincing those who are involved in providing for the professional education of teachers that the change is needed. Change means more work, change means more money, change means uncertainty. Unfortunately change also means that what you permitted to happen previously may be open to serious criticism.

Despite these problems of personnel and climate, professional educational administrators cannot surely go on ignoring reports and papers such as Austin's *The Torch Lighters*, her scholarly and comprehensive chapter entitled "Professional Training of Reading Personnel" in the Sixty-Seventh Yearbook of the National Society of Education, *Innovation and Change in Reading Instruction*, and Marion Jenkinson's "New Developments in Reading: Implications for Teacher Education" recorded in the proceedings of the Second Invitational Conference on Elementary Education in Canada (1967). There is a great chasm between the recommendations of these two leaders in the field of education in reading and what is provided in New Zealand today.

From both a pre-service and an inservice point of view, it is most important that those who apply for positions at this level, have had opportunity not only to engage successfully in teaching but equally importantly, that they have had opportunity to engage in various courses of study and research at an advanced level in reading. That those in 'high places' in our Education Departments have not seen fit

to encourage and facilitate the development of such courses demonstrates a serious lack of awareness of the essential needs of one of the most important areas of the curriculum.

The Immediate Needs: Pre-Service Reading Education

The recommendations and outlines listed here should not be seen as being definitive. A comprehensive treatment of the needs in the reading education of teachers is to be found in the Sartain and Stanton book, *Modular Preparation for Teaching Reading* (1974). The International Reading Association's (1968) *Roles, Responsibilities and Qualifications for Reading Specialists* in another useful outline of the needs of those who are to specialize in reading.

Five main aspects of the needs in reading education will be referred to in this section: the preparation necessary for those involved directly in teacher education in reading, the prerequisites for student teachers taking a basic course in reading, the content of a basic course in reading, the presentation of a basic course in reading, and the content of a series of in-depth courses in reading.

A. The preparation of teachers responsible for courses in reading education: some necessary prerequisites.

Previous teaching experience

1. To ensure that those responsible for these courses can communicate with students and the teachers in schools, it is essential that the college teacher has as wide a background of successful teaching as possible.
2. It would be preferable for the college reading teacher to have had some specialist responsibilities in reading, before accepting a position in reading education.

Professional qualifications in reading

1. College reading education teachers should have taken in-depth courses in reading. These courses should have enabled a study to be made of reading teaching at all levels of education.
2. Specific study should have been made of such topics as: the processes and skills involved in reading; reading retardation involving diagnosis of difficulty and corrective teaching; integrating reading with other areas of the curriculum, books suitable for different stages of development, and the use of the various audio visual aids for use in both course presentation and reading teaching.
3. College reading teachers should have developed a thorough understanding of how language works and how it is used in communicating, thinking and learning through

studies made in the fields of linguistics and psycho-linguistics.

4. College reading teachers should have demonstrated their ability to conduct research in their chosen field of study.

B. The preparation of student teachers taking the basic course in reading.

1. Students should be verbally fluent, sufficiently flexible so that they are open to behaviour change, and be capable, interested readers.
2. Students should be able to demonstrate a knowledge of the structure of language and how it works.
3. Provision should be built in to teacher education courses for those students suffering from reading and other language disabilities to receive corrective treatment. Students who do not respond to corrective teaching should be excluded from the institution with provision made for their return in the future if adequate improvement is demonstrated.
4. Reading courses for student teachers should always be good models of sound reading practice.
5. Courses for student teachers in other subject areas should be good models of reading teaching in each subject field.

C. The content of a basic course in reading.

Content should be of sufficient depth and breadth to allow students to develop:

1. A thorough understanding of the nature of the reading process, its psychological base and development.
2. An adequate mastery over the skills of reading.
3. The skills and abilities necessary to implement a diagnostic approach to the teaching of reading.
4. A comprehensive understanding of the interrelationship of the language arts and a knowledge of the structure of language and its development in order that they may use every available opportunity to integrate their reading instruction in their future classrooms.
5. A sufficiently flexible approach to teaching reading in order that they can implement a variety of approaches where necessary.
6. A detailed knowledge of and a feeling for the field of literature, instructional reading materials, and suitable content materials.
7. An understanding of how the media and parents can help in reading learning and teaching.

D. The presentation of a basic course in reading.

1. A course of study in the field of reading should involve the student in both theory and practice, with a minimum lecture hour commitment of 80 hours. The initial stages of the course should involve the student in gaining mastery over the content of reading and in studying methods of skill teaching.
2. Diagnostic teaching experience should be obtained through a sequence of experiences arranged in consecutively more complex situations:
   i. experience gained in teaching reading with one child.
   ii. experience gained in teaching reading with a small (2 to 3 children) relatively homogeneous group involving minimal individualisation.
   iii. experience gained in teaching reading with a small (3 pupils of same age) heterogeneous group, involving maximum individualisation.
   iv. experience gained in teaching reading with a larger (6 to 7 pupils) group at the same instructional level but with varying skill needs.
   v. experience gained in teaching reading with a whole class over a continuous period of time.
3. Concurrently with these teaching experiences students should be:
   i. reporting, explaining and justifying their teaching experiences to other students and to the teacher.
   ii. involved in micro-teaching occasionally for the purpose of:
      - developing an awareness of the effectiveness of their teaching activity.
      - being initiated into the art of self-criticism.
   iii. view video-tapes of actual teaching situations for the purpose of:
      - learning to conduct diagnostic testing sessions.
      - learning teaching techniques.
      - the analysis of lesson plans, and
      - analyzing classroom organisation.
   iv. continuing their study of the theory and content of reading.
   v. involved in the concurrent study of the other language arts; listening, speaking and writing.
   vi. involved in the concurrent study of children's literature, including graded instructional reading materials.

E. The content of selected study in reading of two and/or three years' duration.

The need is urgent to send at least some students out into schools with an "in-depth" background in the study of reading. The following list of topics is not to be taken as definitive:

1. The reading process.
2. The nature of language development and reading at various stages of growth.
3. measurement, evaluation and diagnosis including reading test construction of various kinds.
4. The content of reading. The learning processes involved in skill development.
5. Reading disability. A study of the whole field leading to an in-depth study of some specific learning disabilities hindering reading growth. Related clinical observation and experience.
6. The whole field of reading materials including book selection.
7. Research in reading. The conducting of researchers individually and collectively in selected areas. Learning the relevant research techniques.

The Immediate Needs: Inservice Education

There is a pressing need for massive inservice teacher education programmes in reading for teachers at kindergarten, primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education. Austin reports on a study conducted by Komarek (1962) of 52 school systems to learn how the deficiencies of retarded readers were met. Komarek found that classroom teachers were responsible for all the help given to poor readers in 70 per cent of the systems studied. She found that most of the teachers had received no training in determining reading retardation and had had no formal course work in the diagnosis and treatment of reading disabilities. Austin comments: 'Clearly a dilemma exists: many teachers are fully aware of their inadequacies as they try to discharge the responsibilities which schools impose on them, but they have not taken the initiative to remedy the situation. Nor can the school administrators (headmasters) be absolved completely of blame. They have frequently permitted unqualified personnel to work with disabled readers . . .' (1968, p. 364).

This dilemma already faces New Zealand teachers. To whom can they report their inadequacies in the diagnosis and correction of reading difficulties? It is characteristic of our teachers to admit their inadequacies to departmental inspectors so that they can receive

help? Can two or three reading advisors for each Education Board district meet these needs?

1. Inservice programmes should not be limited to a few teachers. There is an urgent need for an extensive re-education programme that eventually reaches all teachers. The programme should be re-cycled every five years.
2. Inservice programmes should become more of a co-operative venture between university, teachers college, Education Department and teachers. Reading Advisors should be based in teachers colleges, both primary and secondary. Reading teaching staff in colleges should be increased to administer and teach in regular inservice programmes.
3. The content of inservice programmes should always be geared to the specific needs of the teachers and the children they teach.
4. Auto-instructional inservice courses of the type being developed in Auckland at present (Early Reading Inservice Course) have to be made available on a widespread basis.

The Needs of the Future

1. Professional courses for basic and advanced study in reading should be extended to allow for continuous study leading to advanced degrees in reading. Reading should become a "selected study" in our teachers colleges, along with other subject disciplines.
2. Reading clinics as joint university and teachers college ventures should be established on campuses for three major purposes:
   i. to provide corrective work with students.
   ii. to provide opportunity for clinical experience for those involved in the teaching of reading courses.
   iii. to provide opportunity for clinical experience for those involved in studying reading.
3. Experimental programmes should continue to be encouraged leading to beneficial innovations in the teaching of reading and developing a climate of investigation and research in our schools.
4. Information retrieval resources need to be developed in the field of reading.
5. Opportunity should be provided for the release of teaching staff at the various levels of education to carry out in-depth research in the field of reading. The example of the benefits derived from extensive studies of this kind are to be seen clearly in the outcomes of the work of Dr. Marie Clay in Auckland.

6. Opportunity should be provided for those involved in the pre-service education of teachers to observe their students teaching in the field of reading in their own classrooms, through some form of intern programme.

Conclusion

Throughout this paper, emphasis has been placed on the need for effective reading teaching to be a natural and integral part of any programme where printed materials are used for any purpose. In order that this teaching is not based solely on intuitive grounds, substantial reading education courses must be made available to teachers at all levels of education during their pre-service and inservice courses of study. To continue to accept that only prospective primary school teachers need study reading as a prerequisite for teaching ignores the fact that learning to read is a lifelong process. To continue to accept that prospective teachers can gain mastery over the demanding task of teaching reading during a few short pre-service courses, ignores the complexity of their role in this critically important area of the curriculum. The reading teaching competency of all teachers must be examined so that improvements can be made on a systematic basis. To do otherwise will only add to the growing public feeling that teachers should be held accountable for their failures and as well as their successes.

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THE READING PROBLEM: A CHALLENGE TO TEACHER EDUCATION 18

Glenda Williams

In her Kent study Morris (1966) reported that 45 per cent of children in their first year in the Junior school (i.e. 8 year olds) had not mastered the mechanics of reading.

A high school student referred to me for help with reading had a primary school reading record of 'average to above'.

Perry (1972) commented on "the obedient purposelessness" of the reading of his under-graduate students at Harvard. He suggested that what the students lacked was not the mechanical skills but flexibility and purpose in the use of them.

When told that a students 'can't read', one might well ask the person making the referral what he means. In fact statements such as those quoted raise the question, "What is Reading?".

What is Reading?

The following definitions are quoted in the Bullock Report (1975).

1. One can read in so far as he can respond to the language signals represented by graphic shapes as fully as he has learned to respond to the same language signals of his code represented by patterns of auditory shapes. (Fries)
2. The purpose of reading is the reconstruction of meaning. Meaning is not in print, but it is meaning that the author begins with when he writes. Somehow the reader strives to *reconstruct* this meaning as he reads. (Goodman)
3. A good reader understands not only the meaning of a passage, but its related meaning as well, which includes all the reader knows that enriches or illumines the literal meaning. Such knowledge may have been acquired through direct experience, through wide reading or through listening to others. (Gray)

How one defines reading has obvious implications for how one teaches and assesses it. The statement by Fries is reflected in his materials for teaching reading which focus of the reader's ability to respond to spelling patterns and to re-code these into the sound patterns of his language. While this skill may be accorded a place in the primary stage of learning to read, it has limitations. Goodman's emphasis is on meaning. It is possible to give sound to the graphic signals and for that sound to convey no meaning. Think of reading a legal document. Gray goes a step further. His definition implies that

the reader interacts with the author's meaning or ideas, evaluating what he reads. It implies the development of a full range of reading skills relevant to various purposes for reading.

In these three definitions, the concept of developmental reading seems to unfold. The need for this approach to the teaching of reading to be recognized and adopted is referred to by many writers in the field.

The definition in practice has largely been the first one which is related to the mechanics of reading. The teaching of these mechanics is generally relegated to the province of the infant school where the teaching of reading ends, the assumption being that children will develop the higher order comprehension and task-specific reading skills incidentally.

Teacher Education

This attitude has also been reflected in teacher education courses. The teaching of reading is generally part of the infant education course. A few hours are allocated to it later in the language arts unit of primary courses. Seldom do prospective secondary school teachers receive any education in the teaching of reading at all.

When one considers research findings that the teacher is a significant variable in reading achievement, it behoves us to examine critically the preparation of teachers. Improved pre- and inservice education of teachers was called for at both the U.K.R.A. National Conference and the World Congress of the I.R.A. in 1974. Strong cases have similarly been made by Latham (1968) and Doake (1972).

The Australian Scene

A report on reading standards and needs in a sample of Victorian High Schools published in 1973, called for specific needs in teacher preparation at the pre-service and inservice levels. The South Australian report of Conference R98 (1974) made a similar call, emphasizing that the teaching of reading should be a compulsory component of pre-service education. In Queensland, Berkeley, reporting to the House of Representatives Select Committee (Feb. 1975), pointed to the need for more specific instruction in the teaching of reading in teacher education courses. There are but a few of the calls being made on tertiary institutions to re-examine their courses.

An investigation of content of teacher education courses in Australian Colleges of Education revealed that preparation for the teaching of reading at the pre-service level is generally fragmented and minimal. There were few gratifying exceptions. Moves are afoot in most Colleges to improve teacher preparation in this area.

The Situation Elsewhere

Doake (1972) reported that in New Zealand it is now accepted that at least 60 hours be devoted to the teaching of reading.

A recent survey in the United States of America indicated that all pre-service elementary students receive substantial training in reading instruction, and most secondary teachers receive some. In fact many employing bodies will not register teachers who have not completed a course in the teaching of reading.

The High School Scene

Changes in the education system during the past decade have served to highlight learning problems — communication problems in the main — in High Schools. Policies such as automatic promotion in the primary school, and the raising of the school leaving age are two such. Students who in the past found employment after primary schooling now compulsorily enter high school.

During the past decade, teachers in High Schools have become increasingly concerned about problems of discipline and under-achievement. For some, the concern was so great that they were motivated to act. As it was felt that a certain proportion of the problems may have been due to poor reading levels, investigations were carried out in this area.

In New South Wales within school surveys at the Tamworth and South Sydney Boys High Schools (1961; 1962) revealed similar patterns, viz. that reading achievement of first-form students varied from Grade 3 to Grade 8+ levels. As standardized tests were used, a spread of ability would be expected. Nevertheless, those students at the lower end of the scale would surely experience difficulty reading high school texts. A survey carried out at Liverpool Boys High (1973) also revealed that many students were severely retarded in reading.

In Victoria, concern of staff at the Boronia High School prompted an area survey of twelve High Schools. Twenty-five per cent of students were found to have reading age/chronological-age discrepancies of more than two years.

Results of surveys such as these, and concern generally, have pointed to the need for specialist help in high schools.

Kelvin Grove College of Advanced Education Secondary Resource Teachers Course

At the Kelvin Grove C.A.E. in Brisbane, resource teachers (not to be confused with audio-visual personnel) are prepared to work in a helping role in high schools, providing assistance for students experiencing learning problems and for their teachers.

The course is offered to experienced high school teachers on an end-on full-time/part-time basis, and leads to a Post Graduate Diploma in Secondary Resource Teaching. Students are released by State and private education authorities to undertake the initial semester of study at the College. The remainder of the course is taken externally on a part-time basis with students returning for vacation schools.

The course structure includes the following subjects and hours, each semester being sixteen weeks in duration.

Semester	Subjects	Hours/Semester
A (full-time)	1. The Exceptional Adolescent	44
	2. Diagnostic and Teaching Strategies for Individualizing Instruction	124
	3. Communication for Exceptional Adolescents	96
	4. Interpersonal Relations and Professional Communication	48
	5. Introduction to Research	8
	Total	320
B1 (part-time)	1. Contemporary Issues in Adolescent Education	64
	2. Modern Developments in Special Education	64
	3. Current Issues in Resource Teaching	32
	Total	160
B2 (part-time)	1. Emerging Problems in Communication	80
	2. Research Techniques	80
	Total	160

To be effective, the resource teacher must be able to relate well with teaching colleagues whose reactions may range from hostile rejection to submissive dependency, and must be able to communicate convincingly with administrative staff on school policies affecting students with special needs, as well as be sensitive to students' needs. *Interpersonal Relations and Professional Communication* is considered then to be a vital part of the course.

A major component is the subject, *Diagnostic and Teaching Strategies for Individualizing Instruction*, which aims to develop many of the core strategies and skills of the resource teacher role — observation and testing skills, and strategies to suit varying learning styles and needs of students.

Communication for Exceptional Adolescents, concentrates on the contributions of linguistics to understanding learning difficulties experienced by students and highlights the communication problems peculiar to subject areas. The work of Barnes (1969) and Britton (1970) has created an awareness of classroom communication problems. The subject, *Exceptional Adolescents*, is studied to provide insights into the special educational needs of those adolescents.

Some Course Activities and Tasks

The importance of establishing good communication has been stressed. At the commencement of the course, Principals and their Deputies and Guidance Officers of selected practising schools are invited to the College to an open discussion of the resource teacher role with lecturers and students. Issues in need of clarification are talked through. Interfacings are arranged with Guidance Officers, both those in the field and those in training, and with teacher librarians in training at the College. These interfacings take the form of informal discussions and structured small group discussions.

Each student undertakes a readability study of a high school text to develop an awareness of sentence complexity, and specialist vocabularies and writing styles encountered in different subject areas.

The course practicum covers the following three areas. Lecturers work closely with students during this learning experience.

An introductory study of the school. This considers factors such as location and social environment, size and distribution of student population, school organisation and facilities.

A class study. Students assess a selected class in terms of range of abilities, range of achievements, social and work groups within the class, response to specific subjects, need to modify subject curricula. In conjunction with a subject teacher, the trainee resource teacher designs alternative strategy which is implemented and evaluated.

An individual study. Students assess the strengths, weaknesses and level of development of a pupil identified as having reading problems. A remedial programme is then designed and implemented with that pupil. In addition, the pupil's function in various subject areas is considered in relation to his/her reading problem and suggestions drawn up to facilitate improved learning situations.

The Role of the Resource Teacher

The resource teacher is the member of a team, a facilitator. As reported in the *South Pacific Journal of Teacher Education* (O'Connor, 1975), tasks may include:

1. assisting in screening classes and diagnosing students' learning strengths and weaknesses.
2. assisting in the development of programmes and materials which will help teachers individualize instruction.
3. working with fellow teachers in various subjects to develop relevant reading skills.
4. working closely with school librarians and audio-visual personnel in seeking avenues to facilitate learning by means other than difficult textbooks.
5. withdrawing some students with 'hard-core' learning problems for intensive teaching.
6. discussing with school administration policy decisions for students with special educational needs.
7. working closely with school guidance officers and related support agencies in assisting such students and sharing insights with parents.

In Queensland then, resource teachers are being introduced in both State and private high schools. It is hoped that with their special competencies supplementing those of other members of the educating team, the special needs of individual students may be met.

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NOTE: Results of surveys carried out in high schools in New South Wales and Victoria, and the South Australian Report of Conference R98 were made available by the respective Departments of Education.

PRE-SERVICE COURSES IN READING 19

Gregor A. Ramsey

There has been considerable discussion in recent times concerning the preparedness of teachers to teach fundamental learning skills. Not the least of this discussion is centred on the task of training teachers to teach reading. Much publicity has been given to the survey of pre-service teacher education in reading given at teachers colleges, as reported in *Problems, Practices and Perspectives on the Teaching of Reading in South Australia* (1974). This Report identifies that in South Australia, colleges of advanced education and universities as at July 1974 gave pre-service primary teachers, on average, about sixteen hours and secondary teachers about two hours of training in the teaching of reading.

It may be noted that these proportions derive from a Diploma in Teaching which was developed by the South Australian Education Department, a Diploma which had a common schedule structure in all the former teachers colleges in South Australia. The basic philosophy of this Diploma was that its prime objective was to provide a liberal education for future teachers and as much as two-thirds of the Diploma were devoted to Liberal Studies. This allowed very little time in the Studies in Education section of the Diploma for the teaching of reading among all the other competing educational demands.

All the colleges of advanced education in South Australia are now developing new courses for pre-service training of teachers. These new courses now contain a much heavier emphasis on helping teachers understand the process of basic skill development in children. The courses being established vary markedly from college to college and, unlike the earlier Education Department Diploma, the new Diplomas will allow much greater attention to the importance of reading and its teaching at all levels in schools. Unfortunately, the first students from these Diplomas will not reach schools until 1978.

One example of the emphasis on reading may be seen from the Diploma of Teaching being developed at Torrens College of Advanced Education (1975). In the Main Study Area section of the Diploma course for Early Childhood Education it may be noted that as much as one-third of the twenty-four credits of the Main Study Area specifically relate to language and reading skills. In addition to

these, in the Theory and Practice of Teaching section considerable emphasis is also placed on the teaching of basic skills where as much as one quarter of the credits in this area may relate to teaching reading and related skills.

In the Liberal Studies area, such topics as Educational Media and Communication Studies are encouraged because these relate directly to students' understanding of communication processes, both of which have an indirect relationship to reading.

Aims of the Early Childhood Main Study Area

To provide knowledge, theory and practical experiences such that students will:

understand the behaviour and development of young children;
acquire background relevant to Early Childhood curriculum areas and related methodology;
pursue special interests broadening their Early Childhood interests.

Course Structure

There are sets of units in:

Understanding the young child
Language and reading skills
Curriculum studies
Electives

Twenty-two credits of the minimum of twenty-four that students must take in the Main Study Area are compulsory.

A Report Examined

In preparing this paper I have examined the report of Conference P.98, *Problems, Practices and Perspectives on the Teaching of Reading in South Australia* (1974) and taken the recommendations on pre-service education contained in that Report and teased from it what might be judged the philosophical position taken by the Conference on which the recommendation was based. The philosophical position and its attendant recommendations as interpreted by the author is set out in tabular form below.

PRESERVICE COURSES IN READING

Philosophical Position	Recommendation
ADEQUACY AND COMPULSION	
All teachers are teachers of reading.	More emphasis on the preparation of each teacher as a teacher of reading.

PRESERVICE COURSES IN READING

Philosophical Position	Recommendation
ADEQUACY AND COMPULSION	All teachers to receive compulsory pre-service training in reading.
MODE All courses for trainees should be good models of reading teaching.	Reading to be used in courses in the same manner as it is expected that students will use reading in the classroom.
CONTENT Basic reading courses should have sufficient attention to breadth and depth to develop adequate understanding of reading processes.	Students to develop an understanding of: —reading as a development process; —the skills of reading; —the use of diagnostic materials; —the unifying of the language arts; —the varied approaches to the teaching of reading; —children's literature and library resource materials.
LENGTH A course should have sufficient length to give students mastery over content of reading and methods of teaching.	The students to be involved in both theory and practice of teaching for a minimum contact time. (Eighty hours is considered necessary by some authorities, though quality of instruction is more important than contact time.)

PRESERVICE COURSES IN READING

Philosophical Position	Recommendation
TEACHING PRACTICE	
Courses should provide students with opportunities to observe, participate in and practice the use of reading strategies throughout their preparation.	Teaching experiences to provide a sequence of: —teaching reading with one child; —teaching reading with a small, relatively homogeneous group involving minimum individualization; —teaching reading with a small, relatively homogeneous group involving maximum individualization; —teaching reading with the whole class over a continuous period.
EVALUATION	
Students should regularly report and evaluate their teaching experiences to other students and to the teacher.	Interchange of tertiary staff and students with practising classroom teachers.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Philosophical Position	Recommendation
DEVELOPMENT OF POSITIVE SELF-CONCEPT	
Part of the development of the teacher should include opportunities for the encouragement of a positive self-concept in the ability to experience and practice communication skills.	Courses to be offered for credit encompassing the impressive and expressive arts of reading, listening, speaking and writing necessary in interaction with students.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Philosophical Position	Recommendation
DEVELOPMENT OF SKILLS	
Students should develop for themselves appropriate reading skills.	Courses to be provided for students to become aware of and develop facilities in such skills as skimming, scanning, reading in depth, special and general comprehension.

TEACHING STANDARDS

Philosophical Position	Recommendation
ADEQUACY	
Every teacher is a teacher of reading and this should be recognized by employers.	Require the Education Department to employ teachers who have undertaken a course in teaching of reading as part of their teacher education preparation (to be embodied in requirements for teacher registration).

ADVANCED LEVELS

Philosophical Position	Recommendation
SPECIALIZATION	
There is a need for specialists in various reading areas to be trained to work with teachers who have had only basic training.	Teacher education institutions to provide advanced level courses for preparing: —advisory teachers in reading; —reading specialists; —teachers for special classes.

ASSISTING BEGINNING TEACHERS

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SELF ESTEEM:

—support from principal and other experienced teachers;
—creation of climate where teacher can seek help without feeling at disadvantage (pair with experienced teacher);
—opportunity for recourse to outside resource personnel.

SUPPORT FROM WITHIN SCHOOL:

—co-ordinated induction of teacher;
—planned and structured assistance where needed;
—programme of release for visits to other schools and facilities.

Internships.

SUPPORT FROM OUTSIDE SCHOOL:

—appointment of resource persons from teacher education institutions to assist teacher;
—visits to schools by resource people;
—resource centres in teacher education institutions and regional centres to provide teacher with resource materials.

The resource team.

SELF-HELP:

—meetings of new teachers to share experiences;
—becoming aware of specialized supportive agencies
Reading Development Centre
Secondary Reading Unit
Guidance and Special Education
Teacher Education Institutions
South Australian Reading Association;
—propose improvement in induction plans.

The lifelong learner.

This set of recommendations provides an extremely useful guide to designers of pre-service courses at colleges of advanced education. One could debate the philosophical positions assumed by the Conference members; for example, that all teachers are teachers of reading. There is a strong case to be put that teachers of art or music or physical education are not teachers of reading and, in fact, any emphasis on reading in these courses may act against the child's development in fields of creative endeavour.

There can be no doubt that insufficient emphasis has been placed in the past on the development of a student teacher's own reading and comprehension skills, the development of his abilities to enhance such skills in children, and the general fostering of a realization that reading is one of the important means of communication in our modern society. It is the pre-service teacher education course designer's challenge to give adequate attention to the development of reading teaching skills for all teachers, yet still maintain an appropriate balance among the various competing demands for material to be included in a pre-service teacher's course of training.

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THE TEACHER OF READING: AT THE BEGINNING OF A NEW SCHOOL YEAR 20

Tess Caust

This paper is intended as a guideline for the teacher preparing to teach reading at the beginning of a new school year. It is directed primarily to the teacher of classes with children eight years of age and over.

A teacher at the beginning of the school year usually has a few days before school begins to know which class of children will be under his care. He should seek out any individual reading records that may exist, as well as the medical record the child may have. Having examined existing records the teacher then carefully prepares his own record forms preparatory to identifying the individual needs in reading for each child. A reading record should ideally begin in Grade One and continue throughout a child's school life passing each year from teacher to teacher. (A simple method of recording is given below.) A skills checklist of the phonic elements of the alphabetic code and a table of word attack skills are listed in this article as well as a suggested record form to help the teacher gather and record information on the mastery of the skills for each child. The next step for the teacher is to examine carefully what kinds of reading materials are available to him because once he has met his class and carefully diagnosed where his children are in their reading skills he will need to select reading material appropriate for them.

On becoming a teacher responsible for a class of children it is the teacher's task to attempt to meet the needs of *all* the children under his care. In order to perform this task, the teacher, as a teacher of reading, will need to acquire the following:

1. A knowledge of the skills involved which a child needs in order to master the reading process.
2. A knowledge of all *known* variables which affect a child's reading progress.
3. A knowledge of organizational options open to teachers.
4. A knowledge of the materials available to assist the teacher to meet these needs, including both reading and audio-visual materials.

In relation to 'a knowledge of the reading skills', the teacher needs to remember that the skills to be mastered in order to become a proficient reader, remain constant.

The factors constantly changing are:

1. The differences between children in their mastery of reading skills.
2. The differences between teachers in their own knowledge of the skills and in their presentation of these skills to children.

Many children need to have skills presented in a sequential, systematic way in order to meet their individual needs. Such children need early recognition by the teacher.

Reading Skills may be delineated under three main headings:

1. The Readiness Skills.
   Under this heading are usually listed physical development, motor co-ordination, speech development, social, motivational, environmental, perceptual factors and concepts about print.
2. The Decoding Skills.
3. The Comprehension Skills.

It must be remembered that the terms 'readiness', 'decoding', and 'comprehension' are 'global' terms, each of which can be broken down into specific sub-skills. These sub-skills must then be task analysed and ordered sequentially. The three main areas of skills are interrelated but some skills need to be mastered before others can be undertaken.

In this paper only decoding skills are dealt with. A knowledge of what the skills are in decoding is essential for the teacher if he is to help each child develop into a competent reader. It is in this decoding area that many children have difficulty. Decoding difficulties can be readily diagnosed and learning-teaching situations structured in order to help these children. Chall (1967) demonstrated that reputable phonic programmes are superior to other methods particularly when a child is experiencing difficulty. She also produced evidence indicating that a systematic phonic approach is more successful than when phonics is taught only incidentally.

When children are grouped together by age, a wide range of reading attainment can be expected. Reading is a complex process and contradictory definitions of the word 'reading' add to the complexity (Clymer, 1968). However, part of any definition of 'reading' would need to include the deciphering of a code. In the English language the basis of this code is the alphabet. The code is graphically represented by upper and lower case letters, and various types of script.

e.g. Upper Case letters.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Lower Case letters.

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

and different forms of script.

A F J K Q R S Y **A F J K Q R S Y** *A F J K Q R S Y*

a f j k q r s y **a f j k q r s y** *a f j k q r s y*

These letters represent sounds and have both a *sound* and a name — O as in got, o as in go.

In deciphering the graphic symbols, children will need to distinguish between and identify various types of script and know both the sounds and names of the letters in the alphabet. Such knowledge on the part of each child cannot be taken for granted.

It is the various combinations of this code into parts of a word, a word, phrases, sentences etc. which a child will need to master in order to begin to read. Decoding, i.e. interpreting the alphabetic code, is a continual developmental process beginning early in a child's life and continuing into adulthood. No matter what age the children in the class may be, the teacher will find them at different points along the continuum in the mastery of this code.

TABLE 1

WORD ATTACK SKILLS

Level 1	Recognise, say, write the letters of the alphabet. (a) Lower case letters. (b) Upper case letters.
Level 2	Blend, recognise, and build word families in levels 2-4. 3 letter words in a consonant, vowel consonant pattern. e.g.: p-e-t, c-a-n ab ad ag am an ap at ed eg en et ib id ig im in it ix ob od og op ot ub ud ug um un up us ut
Level 3	2 letter initial consonant blends.
Stage 1	bl br cl cr dr fl fr gl gr pl pr sc sk sl sm sn sp st sw tr tw
Stage 2	2 letter final consonant blends. ft ld lk lp lt mp nd ng nk nt py ry sk sp st ty
Stage 3	3 letter initial consonant blends. scr spl spr str squ

Level 4	Digraphs.
Stage 1	ar er or ee th sh ch qu
Stage 2	oo ay all oa aw a-e ou i-e oy wh ck y - sky, try my y - happy, funny, merry
Stage 3	ow ea ai u-e ir ace ice oi o-e
Stage 4	1. t ie 7. c age 12. t alk 17. l augh 2. t oe 8. c ould 13. t ough 18. tele ph one 3. b urn 9. f air 14. b ought 19. monk ey 4. n ew 10. c ure 15. c aught 20. p oor 5. h igh 11. w eight 16. fr uit 21. he dge 6. m ight and the silent letters.
Level 5	Syllabification — including compound words, prefixes, suffixes, word roots.

Although the Word Attack Skills are organized according to levels of difficulty there will be children working at different levels at the same time and not necessarily in the order specified.

This ordering of the elements or sub-skills into specific sounding, blending, teaching units is known as the Phonic Approach to the teaching of reading. The use of such a sounding approach helps a child to develop an attack which will enable him to decode new words. A specific terminology is used in relation to teaching phonics in reading: a digraph is defined as two letters which together make one sound. This may be vowel digraph (*'ee'* in street), a consonant digraph (*'sh'* in ship), or a vowel-consonant digraph (*'ar'* in chart). The method of teaching may vary from:

h - a - t ha - t h - at	or	S - t - r - i - p str - ip

Combining the elements into one group, e.g. str - ip is becoming common practice.

At the same time, because many words will not allow a sounding way in, and if attempted may lead to confusion, a naming way in or a sight vocabulary must be taught. Examples of words which must be taught as whole units are: the, here, there, these, where, etc.

Often interesting new words are learnt as sight vocabulary before the necessary decoding skills have been mastered.

Below is a table of sight vocabulary skills again ordered from the simple to the more complex (Reading Development Centre, 1973).

TABLE 2

SIGHT VOCABULARY SKILLS

1. Uses the shape (configuration) of words, their position in familiar context, and picture clues to recognise words on sight.
2. Uses reading experiences to add to the number of familiar words recognized "on sight".
3. Readily recognizes at sight the words in a basic word and phrase list, e.g. Dolch, Frances Kucera, or Key Words to Literacy.
4. Distinguishes words of similar configuration on sight, e.g. them - then, those - these, where - were.
5. Recognizes as sight words, those met in a specialized interest such as science, hobby etc.
6. Continues to add words to the sight vocabulary through a variety of reading experiences.

The ordering of these skills has been done in stages of difficulty but it is understood that any child could be working on one or all of these stages at any one time.

Until a child has attained a reading age of approximately ten years (no matter what his chronological age might be), he has not yet mastered the decoding process sufficiently to enable him to read simple texts for pleasure and to gain information from the written text with automatic ease. This reading age of ten years is often arbitrarily defined as the point of 'functional literacy'. Until this point has been reached, the reading material needs to be carefully graded according to vocabulary knowledge and appropriate interest material. After Reading Age 10.0 the teacher can begin to give greater emphasis to the development of specific comprehension skills when a child is reading from text.

A standardized word recognition test given early in the school year will assist a teacher to recognize the range of decoding skills existing between children in any one class. A Word Recognition Test is an attainment test given individually to ascertain a Reading Age. Table 3 shows a sample of children in a Grade Five class with Reading Ages as measured on a word Recognition Test, and chronological ages.

TABLE 3

Grade 5 — Number of children: 30

Boys				Girls			
Name	C.A.	R.A.	Special help needed	Name	C.A.	R.A.	Special help needed
	9.1	9.3			9.1	11.8	•••
	9.6	8.3	•		10.1	12.0	•••
	10.5	10.1			9.7	12.9	•••
	10.4	9.2	•		9.9	12.0	•••
	9.8	10.6			9.9	10.3	
	9.8	11.6	•••		8.11	7.9	•
	9.5	8.7			9.5	11.1	•••
	9.7	9.2			10.1	12.0	•••
	10.3	11.5	•••		9.8	8.0	•
	10.7	9.0	•		9.7	12.4	•••
	9.4	12.7	•••		10.3	11.7	•••
	9.4	13.3	•••		9.2	9.2	
	9.4	7.9	•		9.0	8.1	•
	9.5	12.4	•••		9.0	9.8	
	9.5	9.8			9.6	12.6	•••

From Table 3 it is noted that the range in attainment is five years, from Reading Age 7.9 years to 12.9 years, and thirteen children are below Reading Age 10.0.

TABLE 4

Boys				Girls			
Name	C.A.	R.A.	Special help needed	Name	C.A.	R.A.	Special help needed
	7.7	6.6	•		7.2	6.5	•
	7.10	6.9	•		7.11	7.2	
	9.2	8.2	•		7.10	7.2	
	7.5	5.7	••		7.4	7.3	
	7.7	6.2	•		7.9	11.3	•••
	8.8	5.7	••		7.4	8.4	
	9.0	7.2	••		7.1	9.2	
	8.7	6.7	•		7.8	9.0	
	8.1	6.5	••		8.0	9.1	
	8.7	7.5	•		7.0	6.4	•
	8.11	5.4	••		7.5	5.8	••
	8.3	6.1	••		8.2	5.9	••
	7.1	7.8			7.1	8.6	
	7.0	7.3			7.7	5.9	•
	7.7	7.3			7.4	7.2	

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Table 4 is a sample of children in Grade Three class. The range in attainment is six years from Reading Age 5.4 years to 11.3 years, and several children are only beginning readers. Note carefully that the scores on these tables that indicate special attention is required from the teacher are marked as follows:

* Very specific diagnosis is needed.

** As well as specific diagnosis, special referral to the guidance officer of the school district may be needed.

*** Extension in comprehension skills is required.

The other children in these tables would appear to be progressing normally but if their reading age is under ten much more detailed analysis of their decoding skills will be needed to guide the teacher in developing his programme in teaching the decoding skills.

The information gathered here would be supplemented by any previous reading records and other relevant information. Further information on how the child felt about reading could also be included. This can be acquired by asking the child such questions as the following: 'Do you like to read?', 'What kinds of books do you like to read?', 'What kind of things do you like to do?', 'If you could read easily what kind of books do you think you'd like to read?', 'Do you like books about animals, space, motor cars, etc?'.

Such questioning is an attempt to gain information in order to match the interest of the child with a graded reader to practise his skills. Appropriate graded reading material can be selected for each child (see, for example, Hart and Richardson, 1973).

It is recommended that a Word Recognition Test be used once a year only, preferably at the beginning of the school year. When further analysis of the child's mastery of reading skills is necessary, diagnostic tests should be used. If a teacher devises his own diagnostic tests, he should avoid including words from standardized recognition tests to prevent invalidating their future use.

Diagnostic Tests

There are standardized diagnostic tests available for the teacher to use, or the teacher can devise his own tests. Such tests are specifically designed to indicate the reading skills the child has acquired and those he has yet to learn, and to indicate to the teacher the starting point for further teaching for that child. (If the teacher knows what skills to look for, Readiness and Attainment tests may be used diagnostically.)

The Diagnostic Use of the St. Lucia Graded Word Reading Test

The St. Lucia test (Andrews, 1969) is a word recognition test using the words of the Schonell RI (in a different order and presented

emphasizing the way in which the test can be used diagnostically. An in a different print from the RI). Accompanying the test is a manual Examiners Record Sheet is provided on which the teacher must note exactly how the child attempts each word. This enables the teacher to determine exactly what word attack skills the child is using and what types of errors he is making.

A useful new test that has recently appeared on the market is the Domain Phonic Test (McLeod and Atkinson, 1972).

> The Domain Tests in Phonics were constructed in an attempt to pin-point any weaknesses which a child might have with single letter sounds, short and long vowels, and with consonant and vowel blends. Appropriate exercises were then designed to give practice in and improve the particular deficiencies revealed by the tests . . . The exercises . . . make up the Domain Phonic Workshop (McLeod, Atkinson, 1972).

Teacher Designed Diagnostic Test

Teachers often design their own diagnostic tests to pin-point the decoding skills that the child has not mastered. The important points to remember in designing a test for classroom use are:

1. The test should be relatively easy to administer.
2. The test should be given individually to each child.
3. The test should be sequential, moving from the simple to the more complex skills.
4. The instructions given to each child need to be clear and easy to follow.
5. Any letters and words presented to a child in a diagnostic test should be clearly printed.
6. A simple marking procedure to maximise usefulness of the information gained through the child's performance.
7. The testing situation should be in a relaxed atmosphere, where the child feels at ease.
8. The teacher must know what it is he is testing and be specific.

Below is an example of a teacher designed test.

DECODING SKILLS TEST. (Test administered from left to right in all Sections.)

1. *Sound and say these words.*
   got jam Tom Bob
2. *Say these words* (Sound them if you like).
   grip send strong grunt

3. *Say these words.*

hard	sport	shell	chop
small	rake	nice	when
snow	rail	chirp	noise
fry	stew	caught	phrase
stage	moor		

4. *What are these words?* (Work them out aloud).

dropping understood remembering forget-me-nots
disenchantment predisposition internationalise

This teacher designed test, based on a checklist similar to Table 1 was devised as a quick spot check for mastery and areas of weakness in the main decoding skills. The test presumes that readiness skills have been mastered. This test alone can not provide conclusive evidence that the various decoding skills have been mastered or that weaknesses still exist. It rather provides warnings which can then be followed up with more detailed testing in the specific area of doubt. For example, if the child is unable to sound and say *str* as in strip, provide him with a list of other *str* words to see whether the difficulty is general to all *str* words or specific to the word strip. Again, if administering the above test you suspect that a child has difficulty in discriminating small differences in words, the child may be given the Schonell R7 Visual Discrimination Test (Schonell and Schonell, 1950).

Analysis of the Teacher Test

1. This samples the child's ability to recognize and say small and capital letters and to blend words with vowel, consonant, vowel.
2. Initial and final consonant blends (two consonants, three consonants) are tested in this section.
3. Phonic units are sampled according to their generally accepted order of difficulty.
4. Phonic words which are probably not part of the child's sight vocabulary have been selected to discover whether the pupil has a particular word attack, what kind of word attack is used and how successful it is.

It must be noted that not every child will need to be given every extension test. These are only given when necessary. Remember, the main point of a teacher designed diagnostic test is to indicate to the teacher what the child does not know and what the teacher therefore needs to teach.

Below is a sample of the test given to a child with the teacher's comments marked and noted of help required. The child has one form of the test. This page is for the teachers to record the child's responses.

PUPIL RECORD SHEET — Teacher designed diagnostic test.

Name: John *Chronological Age:* 10·6 *Grade:* 5 *Date:* 6·5·73

Directions: Administer each section of the test from left to right. Circle the mistakes made by the child and write down exactly what the child says.

1. got jam Tom Bob
2. grip send strong (strong) grunt — Check 3 consonant blends: strip string strap
3. hard sport shell shop
   small rake nice when
   snow rail chirp (noise) nose
   fry (stew) stow (caught) cough phrase praze
   (stage) stag (moor) moo
   dropping understood remembering forget-me-nots (notes)
   (disenchantment) predisposition (internationalise)
   d-i-s-e-n-c-h-a-n-t-m-e-n-t p-r-ē-d-i-ē-t-i-c could not attempt

Needs noted and help required.

1. Single sounds. Known
2. Blending consonant vowel consonant. Satisfactory
3. Consonant blends. Check 3 consonant, blends, especially str.
4. Attack on new words. No systematic attack. Spells.
5. Digraphs. Level 1 & 2 - Sound
   Level 3 - check each digraph } Refer to Table I
   Level 4 - not known

(Reading Development Centre, 1973.)

As mentioned earlier a teacher needs to design a method of keeping a reading record form for each child. Such a record might look as follows: (note that other forms of individual records will be needed for day-to-day working in specific skills).

(STIFF CARD)

Child's Name.....

St. Lucia Graded Word Test. (Once per year)								

WORD ATTACK SKILLS

1. Individual letters.							
2. 3 letter consonant vowel consonant.							
3. 2 letter initial blend.							
2 letter final blend.							
3 letter initial blend.							
4. Digraphs. Stage 1.							
Stage 2.							
Stage 3.							
Stage 4.							
5. Prefixes, Suffixes.							

METHODS OF ATTACK.

Syllabalises.							
Sounds.							
No set method.							

The reverse side of the card may be used as a Reading Comprehension record, e.g.

Child's Name.....

Comprehension Strategies

Evaluation and Comment	Date

As a teacher gains confidence in assessing and preparing a reading programme he will change and organize his recording methods as best suit his own needs.

What a child does not know he needs to be taught. Often in a class there are several children with similar difficulties. This allows the teacher to organize skill groups to meet the needs of these children; such a group to be disbanded as soon as the required skill is taught.

Once a skill is taught, e.g. the *ow* sound or the final consonant cluster of *ng*, it needs to be practised for over-learning. It is here that reading games and activities are useful.

Such skill teaching should form part of a daily routine for those children who need it. A short period of skill teaching to a small group of children for five minutes can be followed with ten minutes reinforcement activity for this group, while the teacher moves to another skill group with other children.

When a child has mastered a skill he needs to practise that skill constantly. Carefully selected graded readers allow a child to do this. The teacher needs a personal copy of *Books for the Retarded Reader*, Fifth Edition, (Hart, Richardson, 1973) in order to become familiar with the concept of books graded in vocabulary and interest age. He is then able to select appropriately from what is available in the school to meet the needs in reading of the child.

Learning to decipher the code is a long, often tedious and difficult task for many children. Instruction needs to be short, but daily, always reinforced by some simple writing task. Every effort should be made to keep such tasks short, varied and interesting. As the child moves along the continuum in mastery of decoding skills, interest in reading and language needs to be maintained. Spoken language is primary to, and reading is part of, a total communication process. Reading stories to children, encouraging children to talk and listen to others talk, always blackboarding the new and interesting words or making up experience charts of words and sentences will form part of any reading programme.

The intention of this article has been to explain to the teacher what is involved in the decoding process, and the phonic approach to the teaching of reading. This information relates only to point one as explained at the beginning of this article, "A knowledge of the skills involved which a child needs in order to master the reading process".

In regard to point two, "A knowledge of all known variables which affect a child's reading progress", some of the known variables are discussed in any text devoted to the teaching of Reading.

Point three, "A knowledge of organizational options open to

teachers". Different children will be at different stages along the continuum of decoding skills and will acquire different skills at varying times. Therefore organizational patterns and skills instruction groups will be ever changing in composition. The organization of groups will be an on-going process as different children will acquire skills at different rates and will be ready for a new skill at different times. Some forms of classroom organisation in the area of reading have been described in an article, "New Forms of Classroom Organisation as Related to Reading", (Smith, N. B., 1966).

Point four, "A knowledge of the materials available to assist the teacher to meet these needs, including both reading and audio-visual materials". A knowledge of the materials will only come with experience, however, a teacher needs to visit the infant school constantly and become familiar with beginning reading materials. When using new reading schemes always read carefully the Teacher's Manual. Commercially prepared reading material is usually designed according to the bias of the writer/s. This bias will often relate to both the preparation of the material, i.e. belief in the phonic approach, or linguistic approach, or whole word approach etc., and to a bias as to whether children need systematic teaching of the decoding skills, or whether the author/s expect such knowledge to be acquired incidentally.

Factors to consider when examining materials are outlined in "Summary of Criteria for Assessing Reading Approaches" (Southgate, 1970).

> "No programme can do all things for all children, and no programme can be all things for all teachers." (Chall, 1967.)

In summary, decoding is only a part of the total reading programme and to assume that reading is only the acquisition of these decoding skills would be to separate reading from the total area of communication which includes listening, speaking and writing. The emphasis in this article has been to incorporate phonic difficulties that a child might have in learning to read into the total reading programme of any classroom teacher. In doing this the view taken of reading is a developmental one, where,

> Reading is seen as an aspect of the sequence of related progressive changes which follow one another as the individual progresses from birth to maturity. Related closely to physical emotional and social development, progress in reading will form an integral part of the total growth of the individual. The acquisition of reading is seen, in common, with other developmental processes, to be sequential, having its roots in pre-school linguistic and life experience and proceeding through lower-order decoding skills to higher-order reading skills. Further, as the child moves through the sequential process of learning to read, the

ideas acquired through his reading influence his psychological and social development. (Latham, 1968 in Melnik and Merritt, 1972)

A teacher needs constantly beside him resource books in the development of reading skills. Below are listed some resource books which teachers have found useful.

Education Department, 1971. *Phonics and Word Study Handbook for Teachers, Grades I and II.* Adelaide: Education Department of S.A.

Education Department, Research and Planning Branch, 1973. *Listening and Talking Activities.* Adelaide: Education Department of S.A.

Reading Development Centre, 1972. *Reading: Word Recognition and Listening Activities.* Adelaide: Reading Development Centre.

Reading Development Centre 1973. *Resource Book on the Development of Reading Skills.* Adelaide: Education Department.

Other useful resource books.

Monroe, M., Artley, A. Sterl, and Robinson, H. 1970. *Basic Reading Skills. (Teachers Handbook.)* Atlanta: Scott Foresman.

Herr, Selma, 1970. *Learning Activities for Reading.* Duberque: William C. Brown.

Ekwall, Eldon, 1970. *Locating and Correcting Reading Difficulties.* Columbus: Charles E. Merrill.

Most schools have a special reference section of books and journals on reading. However, such books and journals need to be constantly up-dated.

For a teacher's own reference library the following three books will be found useful. They are the set texts for the Open University Course of Reading.

Melnick, A. and Merritt, J. (eds.) 1972. *The Reading Curriculum.* London: University of London Press.

Melnick, A. and Merritt, J. (eds.) 1972. *Reading: Today and Tomorrow.* London: University of London Press.

Reid, Jessie F. 1972. *Reading: Problems and Practices.* London, Ward Lock Educational.

RESOURCES

Hart, J. A. and Richardson, J. A. 1973. *Books for the Retarded Reader Fifth Edition.* Hawthorn, Victoria: A.C.E.R.

This is the most useful source book at present available for information about graded readers.

Available: A.C.E.R., Frederick Street, Hawthorn, Victoria.

Andrews, R. J. 1969. *St. Lucia Graded Word Reading Test.* Brisbane: Teaching and Testing Resources.

Basic Kit S101 consists of Manual, test sheet and 50 student

record forms. Kit S102 contains 100 replacement record forms.
Available: Teaching and Testing Resources, P.O. Box 77, Fortitude Valley, Queensland.

McLeod, J. and Atkinson, J. 1972. *The Domain Phonic Test Kit.* Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd.
Consists of 1 Domain Phonic Manual, 2 sets of Domain Phonic Tests, 5 Phonic Record Books and 5 sets of Phonic Workshops. Sets of 5 Phonic Record Books and 5 Phonic Workshops may be purchased separately.
Available: Penguin Books, 105 Gouger Street, Adelaide.

Schonell R7 Visual Discrimination Test can be found in Schonell, F. J. and Schonell, Eleanor, 1950. *Diagnostic and Attainment Testing. Fourth Edition.* Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd.

Reading Development Centre, 1975. *Games, Games, Games. Reading: Word Recognition and Listening Activities (Third Edition).* Adelaide: Reading Development Centre, South Australian Education Department.

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Clymer, T. 1968. What is 'reading'?: Some current concepts. In Robinson, Helen M. (ed.) 1968. *Innovation and Change in Reading Instruction.* 67th Year Book of the National Society for the Study of Education, Chicago: National Society for the Study of Education through University of Chicago Press.

Latham, W. 1968. Are Today's Teachers Adequately Trained for the Teaching of Reading? in Melnik, Amelia and Merritt, J. (eds.) 1972. *Reading: Today and Tomorrow.* London: University of London Press.

Reading Development Centre. 1973. *Resource Book on the Development of Reading Skills. Revised Edition.* Adelaide: Reading Development Centre, South Australian Education Department.

Southgate, Vera. 1970. "Summary of Criteria for Assessing Reading Approaches" in Southgate, Vera and Roberts, G. R. 1970. *Reading — which approach?* London: University of London Press.

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